

# MARIOLOGY

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VOLUME TWO

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**PART IV**  
**MARY, FULL OF GRACE**



## CHAPTER I

# Mary's Fullness of Grace Considered Positively<sup>1</sup>

THE unique state of grace which caused the angel to salute the Mother of God as "full of grace" is often explained by the Fathers as owing to the divine motherhood itself. For through this motherhood Mary was united to the very principle of grace, was so filled and clothed with it that the fullness of the Godhead dwelt "bodily" in her. On the strength of this grace, analogous to the "grace of the union" in Christ, they explain the wealth of created, or qualitative, graces brought in its train. They interpret the Greek expression for "full of grace" (*χαριτοῦν*) in regard to Mary, analogically as in Christ, in a threefold manner: first, in accordance with the figure of the ark of the covenant, as *χρυσοῦν*, i.e., to gild with the gold of the Godhead; secondly, in accordance with the figure of the "cloud of light" and with that of the "woman clothed with the sun" as *πυροῦν*, i.e., to glow through and through with the fire of the Godhead; and thirdly, in accordance with Ps. 44:8, as an anointing and perfuming of Christ's whole attire with the ointment of the Godhead. Under these last

<sup>1</sup> For literature, see St. Albert the Great, *Mariale*, q. 33 ff.; St. Thomas, IIIa, q. 27, a. 3 f.; also Gregory of Valencia, Medina, Suarez; St. Antoninus, *Summa*, p. 4, tit. 15; Trombelli, *Mariae ss. vita*, diss. 3, q. 2; Passaglia, *De imm. conc.*, sec. 1 and sec. 5, cap. 4. For the historical development of the doctrine, see Vasquez, *in 3 partem Summae*, disp. 120.

two viewpoints in particular, the connection of created with uncreated grace is evident, and their import and extent are also made clear.

### MARY'S FULLNESS OF GRACE IN GENERAL

From the words of the angel who saluted her as one to whom God had granted grace, or one "full of grace," it follows that, in general and in a most exceptional manner, Mary was endowed with all grace, pre-eminently with sanctifying grace. In accordance with the specific purpose governing the measure of her grace, evidently Mary surpassed in sanctifying grace not only all human beings to whom grace has been granted in superlative degree, but even angels the most exalted. The Church in all ages, especially since the Council of Ephesus, has maintained that Mary enjoyed this particular state of grace at least from the moment of Christ's conception; and we may say with sufficient certainty, also from her initial sanctification.

This state was but fitting in view of the exalted dignity and position to which she was destined. God's honor required that He bestow upon His mother such holiness as would enable her worthily to fulfill the service she was to render Him and that through this most intimate association she might be brought to a holiness like to His own. Moreover, the love of God, whereby Mary in an unparalleled way becomes daughter, bride, and sanctuary of the divinity, requires that she be perfectly prepared for this association with God and, to that end, be raised to a participation in His perfection. It would indeed be inconsistent that she in whom the Source of grace was infused and appropriated in a unique manner and

through whose mediation this Source of grace must be given to the world, should not herself be the first to experience the effects of this benign influence. Neither would it be fitting that she from whom Christ willed to receive bodily life should have no greater share than others in His divine life. To understand fully the force of this reasoning, it suffices to recall the intimate unity and the close, mutual association between Christ and His mother from the moment of His conception till His birth.

Theologians most judicially apply here the words which are indeed typical: "The Lord loveth the gates of Sion above all the tabernacles of Jacob," and also the verse of Isaias: "In the last days the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be prepared on the top of mountains."<sup>2</sup> Among the Fathers we should note, for instance, Basil of Seleucia:<sup>3</sup> "Who does not marvel over the measure in which Mary surpasses all those whom we venerate as saints? If God bestowed so much grace on His servants, what kind of virtue do we think His mother has? Must it not be a much greater virtue than the virtue of those who are subject to her? Be it known to anyone that, if Peter was called blessed and had the keys of the kingdom consigned to him, she before all others should be proclaimed blessed to whom it was given to bring forth Him whom Peter orally avowed; if Paul was called vessel of election because he carried forth and divulged the august name of Christ everywhere in the world, what kind of vessel will the mother of God be?" Also Gregory the Great:<sup>4</sup> "The blessed Mary Mother of God, ever a virgin, can be described by the name of this mountain. For she was the

<sup>2</sup> Ps. 86:2; Isa. 2:2.

<sup>3</sup> Basil of Seleucia, Or. 39 *in s. Deiparae annunt.*

<sup>4</sup> St. Gregory the Great, *in I Reg.*, c. 1, n. 5; *PL*, LXXIX, 25.

mountain that surpassed in height every elected creature by the dignity of her election. Is the sublime mountain not Mary, who, to reach the conception of the eternal Word, raised the summit of merits above all choirs of angels to the throne of God? Prophesying the excellent dignity of this mountain, Isaias says: 'In the last days . . . '

We should note the commentaries of the Fathers on the salutation of the angel, as found in Passaglia.<sup>5</sup> Their meaning is summed up in the bull *Ineffabilis* as follows: "This solemn and unparalleled salutation, heard at no other time, shows the Mother of God as the seat of all divine graces, and as adorned with all the gifts of the divine Spirit. It also shows her as the almost infinite repository and inexhaustible abyss of these gifts to such a degree that, being at no time guilty of sin and together with her Son partaking of a perpetual blessing, she deserved to hear Elizabeth, under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, say: 'Blessed art thou. . . .'"

#### MARY'S FULLNESS OF GRACE AS CONTRASTED WITH THAT OF CHRIST

As evidenced by the translation of the angel Gabriel's salutation, *gratia plena* ("full of grace"), from the earliest ages the Latin Church has characterized the inexhaustible wealth of grace summed up in the dignity of Mary as fullness of grace, to be understood in a sense analogous to that in which fullness of grace is attributed to Christ Himself. A certain fullness of grace is ascribed to all the saints since they possess in its fullness that grace essential to their particular perfection, or since in them grace radi-

<sup>5</sup> *Op. cit.*, col. 1093 ff.

ates in a degree relatively higher than in others: plenitude of sufficiency and excellence. In Mary this fullness was taken in the natural sense of a wealth that does not follow the ordinary measure. Compared with the wealth of others, it is beyond measure or degree; it surpasses the latter as the whole does the part, as the force of water of a river or, rather, of the sea, surpasses that of a brook: plenitude of greatest abundance and singularity. Such wealth is embodied in Mary's relatively unlimited dignity and in her direct relationship to the divine principle of grace dwelling bodily in her, belonging to her, and communicating itself to others only through her. Hence her place as Queen and Mother of all saints, or as channel of grace and mystical heart of the Church.

In this respect Mary's plenitude of grace is noteworthy as an overflowing fullness: plenitude of redundancy. It could and must enable Mary to cooperate effectively and by virtue of her own activity in the distribution of grace to others. Thus Mary must exercise her influence in particular cases, for individual subjects or individual graces, and also for all men in general, and for each grace to be communicated to them. Consequently Mary's fullness of grace is a universal, unlimited, overflowing fullness: plenitude of universal and indefinite redundancy.

Despite this specific resemblance to the fullness of grace in Christ, there exists at all times a real and very marked difference between Christ's fullness of grace and that of Mary in regard to the reason, the content, and the overflowing of grace. The one is to the other as the light of dawn to the light of day, as the water of a stream to that of the sea. Hence theologians make a distinction in the plenitude of redundancy on both sides: in Christ

they call it “plenitude of effluence or efficiency”; in Mary, merely “plenitude of affluence.”

The harmonious unity of this double, eminent, and central fullness of grace is demonstrated from the fact that in the organism of the physical body the fullness of life of the whole, as distinguished from the life of each individual member, has not one bearer but two bearers: the head and, depending on the head, the heart.

Understood thus, Mary’s fullness of grace finds expression in the Sacred Scriptures, especially in the description of the beautiful raiment of the queen in psalm 44, and more particularly in the description of the beauty and fertility of the bride in the Canticle of Canticles; again, in the application of Ecclesiasticus, chap. 24, which chapter accords perfectly with psalm 44.

The reason and manner of this fullness of grace is clear from 12:1, “A great sign appeared in heaven: A woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars.” St. Bernard says: “Without doubt by that fire (of divine wisdom) the lips of the prophet are purified, by that fire seraphim are set on fire. In another way Mary merited by far not only to be summarily touched, but to be covered on all sides, to be enveloped and enclosed, by that fire. This woman’s outer garment is indeed most bright as well as very hot; with her all things are known to be irradiated to such an excellent degree that man is not allowed to suspect anything in her, that is, anything dark, or even somewhat obscure or less bright, not even moderately warm or not fully hot.”<sup>6</sup>

St. Thomas also attaches the reason and effect of Mary’s

<sup>6</sup> St. Bernard, *Serm. Dom. infra. Oct. Ass.*, n. 3; *PL*, CLXXXIII, 431.

specific fullness of grace to both functions of her motherhood: "Whereas the Blessed Virgin Mary received such a fullness of grace that she was nearest of all to the Author of grace; so that she received within her Him who is full of all grace; and, by bringing Him forth, she in a manner dispensed grace to all."<sup>7</sup>

The idea of the cause of grace and the resultant infusion of the fullness of the Godhead is advanced by the Fathers for Mary's absolute fullness of grace in a way analogous to the hypostatic union in Christ's humanity. Peter Chrysologus says: "Hail, full of grace. For grace is bestowed on the individual by portions, but the fullness of grace was given in fullness to Mary."<sup>8</sup> This text is usually quoted according to the letter *Cogitis me* of Pseudo-Jerome; just as the entire context, so the latter derived this text from Chrysologus; Pseudo-Jerome contributing only the subordinate clause: "Because, although we believe that the holy Fathers and prophets were in the state of grace, it was not to the extent of a fullness of grace. But in Mary the fullness of grace is found, as in Christ, although in another way."<sup>9</sup> St. Bernard says: "In the Acts of the Apostles we read that Stephen was full of grace and that the apostles were filled with the Holy Ghost, but in a far different way from that of Mary. In another way, neither in him did the fullness of the Godhead dwell bodily, in the way it did in Mary, nor did they conceive of the Holy Ghost, in the way that Mary did."<sup>10</sup>

The Fathers, therefore, often liken Mary to an abyss, a sea, a treasurehouse of grace. They speak of the emi-

<sup>7</sup> St. Thomas, IIIa, q. 27, a. 5 ad 1.

<sup>8</sup> St. Peter Chrysologus, *Serm.* 143; *PL*, LII, 583.

<sup>9</sup> *PL*, XXX, 127.

<sup>10</sup> St. Bernard, *Hom. super Missus est*, III, 2; *PL*, CLXXXIII, 72.

nent and inconceivable greatness of her beauty, purity, and holiness which renders her a living mirror of the Godhead. They extol the sublime height of her dignity and the incomprehensible wonder of her motherhood.<sup>11</sup> This fullness to overflowing is mentioned by Chrysologus also: "Thou hast found grace. How much? As much as he had said previously: to fullness. Indeed, a fullness of grace which emptied itself in a heavy shower and flooded the whole creature."<sup>12</sup> And more profoundly it is mentioned by St. Bernard: "Thou hast found grace. How much? A fullness of grace, singular grace. Singular or ordinary? Undoubtedly both, because full, and singular to the same extent as ordinary; for thou hast received even ordinary grace in a singular manner. As singular, in extent, I say, as ordinary; because, above all others, thou alone hast found grace. Singular, that thou alone mightest find this fullness; ordinary, that all others might receive of that very fullness. . . . Undoubtedly so, for in this way the dew was once entirely upon the fleece, entirely upon a space of ground; but not entirely upon a part of that space of ground, as upon the fleece."<sup>13</sup>

Following up such declarations of the Fathers, the idea of Mary's fullness of grace is explained by the Scholastics of later date, especially by Suarez.<sup>14</sup> They assert that at least after the conception of Christ, or rather, at the end of her life, Mary's wealth of grace surpassed the grace of each individual angel and saint, and also that of all taken

<sup>11</sup> See Passaglia, *De imm. conc.*, sec. 1 and sec. 5, c. 4; and Theoph. Raynaud, *Dipt. Mar.*, p. 2, punct. 7.

<sup>12</sup> St. Peter Chrysologus, Sermo 142; *PL*, LII, 579.

<sup>13</sup> St. Bernard, *Serm. 3 de annunt.*, n. 8; *PL*, CLXXXIII, 396.

<sup>14</sup> Suarez, *De incarn.*, disp. 18, sec. 4.

collectively. In this respect, likewise, it corresponds to the fullness of grace in Christ. However, this viewpoint can at best be regarded as only probable. The main argument for this, the general communication of grace through Mary, is not conclusive. Certainly this communication is not to be understood simply in this way, namely, that the gift of the cause of grace came to Mary first and in a unique manner and only through her to others, and therefore depended on her consent and physical cooperation. It means, rather, that, with due allowance, the communication of grace through Mary was partly the result of her spiritual beauty in the sight of God, conditioned by her created grace, her works, and her prayers.

But apart from the uncertainty whether the grace granted to the angels was given to them also because of Mary, from this viewpoint we consider that Mary acts, not *ex condignitate* but only *ex congruitate*; not independently, but only in formal union with Christ's merits, or purely by ministerial cooperation. Such activity does not assume that the grace gained thereby is virtually contained in the grace of him who gains it. When it is presumed, as indeed it must be, that, from the beginning of her life, Mary's grace surpassed in degree that of the highest angel, the continual increase of this grace assumes such proportions that comparison with individual angels and saints seems inadequate, and a comparison with the grace of all taken collectively suggests itself in supplement.

Theologians and ascetics have analyzed and explained Mary's fullness of grace in many ways. Such were especially St. Albert the Great, Richard of St. Lawrence, St.

Bonaventure, Toletus.<sup>15</sup> St. Thomas<sup>16</sup> defines Mary's fullness of grace according to these three degrees: 1. The filling of Mary's soul to the utmost with all graces necessary for the practice of good and the avoidance of evil. 2. The overflowing of grace from Mary's soul to her body to sanctify it for the conception and birth of Christ. And through this conception and birth: 3. The overflowing of grace on all men. The most important characteristics of Mary's growth to fullness of grace will be discussed later on.

### GROWTH OF GRACE IN MARY

As the light of dawn differs from the full light of day, so Mary's fullness of grace differs from that of Christ in so far as it was not complete from the beginning but was subject to an interior progress. In Mary grace was not, as in Christ, simply a grace complete in itself from the beginning, that is to say, complete in the light of glory; but, as in other creatures in the way of probation, was capable of increase in its measure and activity. This is especially true of the period before Christ's conception; so much so that only with this latter as its essential reason does the specific fullness of Mary's grace begin. Hence theologians distinguish in Mary not only the state of sanctification and that of glorification, as in Christ, but also a twofold sanctification and, answering to it, a double phase of her holy life on earth. In its first phase Mary's grace was more

<sup>15</sup> St. Albert the Great, *Mariale*, q. 79 ff.; Richard of St. Lawrence, *De laudibus B.M.V.*, I, 4; Pseudo-Bonaventure, *Speculum B.M.V.*, lect. 5-7; Toletus, *in Luc.*, 1, annot. 67.

<sup>16</sup> St. Thomas, *Collat. de Ave Maria*, Parma, XVI, 133: *Dicitur plena gratia quantum ad tria: primo quantum ad animam . . . ; secundo quantum ad redundantiam animae ad carnem vel corpus . . . ; tertio quantum ad re-fusionem in omnes homines.*

a *dispositio ad formam*. Consequently, unlike that of Christ, which from the beginning was based on complete union with the principle of grace, it had the character of the grace granted also to other chosen creatures. In the second phase Mary's grace was simply an *effectus formae praesentis*. Hence it bore the specific character of grace in Christ as opposed to that of mere creatures, and rightly so, since to some extent it shares in the proper character of perfect grace. Some theologians carried the distinction between both phases so far as to accept for the first, though not for the second phase, a progress in grace or an increase of it through her own merits. This view undoubtedly goes too far and consequently has found few supporters. For, just as the grace of the motherhood, unlike the grace of the hypostatic union, does not immediately produce the light of glory, so neither need it at once communicate the entire fullness of created grace which flows from it.

Only the eccentric Christopher Vega<sup>17</sup> tried to establish as probable that Mary had the beatific vision during her whole life on earth. This opinion is altogether too daring and not in accordance with Mary's faith. That she had at times the beatific vision, for instance, at the moment of Christ's conception, is accepted by many, among others by Suarez.<sup>18</sup> It is, however, a mere conjecture, against which serious objections can be raised.<sup>19</sup>

The Fathers frequently make a distinction between Mary's two sanctifications, before and in the conception of Christ, although between them there is such a mutual

<sup>17</sup> Vega, *Theol. Mar.*, without mention of exact place.

<sup>18</sup> Suarez, *De incarn.*, disp. 19, sec. 4, n.2.

<sup>19</sup> These objections disappear when the vision of the divine essence is accepted, as normally forming the highest and ultimate point of mystical life. See Rev. *d'ascet. et de myst.*, III (1922), 249–71; IV (1923), 256–71; V (1924), 33–59.

relation that the first is often presented under the viewpoint of the second. Since the time of Pseudo-Jerome, a favorite figure for illustrating the distinction<sup>20</sup> between the first and the second sanctification has been that of wool which, because of its purity, is suited to absorb purple, but which, by this absorption, takes on the nature of the purple. It played a special part in the epistolary dispute between Peter de La Celle and Nicholas of St. Alban. To the detriment of the first stage Peter pressed the distinction too positively when he said: "Halt here, brother, and give battle, that you may become acquainted with the Virgin before she was mother and the Virgin after she had become mother; that you may observe the abode of Wisdom in its beginning as well as already completed; that you may distinguish the wool pure white by the first grace, from that purple-dyed by the second grace in the blood of the shell-fish; that you may separate the wool which has not yet been moistened by impregnation from that which has been saturated by the incarnation."<sup>21</sup> In answer Nicholas remarked: "Make the distinction in such wise between the Virgin before she was mother and the Virgin after she had become mother that, far beyond any other virgin, a singular privilege chose her who, before she was mother, was singularly full of grace according to the testimony of the angel, and who, after she had become mother, was singularly distinguished as the depository of the Holy Ghost; who before she was mother was, like the whitest of wool, not stained by any inclination to evil, and who, after she had become mother, was, like the purple dyed by the purple shell-fish, singularly

<sup>20</sup> Pseudo-Jerome, *Epist. Cognitis me*, *PL*, XXX, 129.

<sup>21</sup> Peter de La Celle, *Epist. 171*; *PL*, CCII, 618.

moistened and saturated by the Holy Ghost, so that she might be surrendered to no other but divine use.”<sup>22</sup>

In Mary this progress in grace is a progress of the inflation and penetration by divine light. Peter de La Celle finds this indicated in the figure, carried through by degrees, of the light encircling the bride in the Canticle of Canticles: “For what reason could we sing with the Church: Who is she that cometh forth as the morning rising, certainly in her birth, fair as the moon in her holy association, bright as the sun in the divine conception, terrible as an army set in array by her heavenly exaltation and assumption, if no increase of virtues had taken place in her?”<sup>23</sup>

The three degrees of supernatural perfection effected by grace, united in Christ though separate in Mary, are distinguished by St. Thomas as follows: “In the things of nature first there is perfection of disposition, for instance, when matter is perfectly disposed for the form. Secondly, there is the perfection of the form; and this is the more excellent, for the heat that proceeds from the form of fire is more perfect than that which disposed to the form of fire. Thirdly, there is the perfection of the end; for instance, when fire has its qualities in the most perfect degree, having mounted to its own place. In like manner, there was a threefold perfection of grace in the Blessed Virgin. The first was a kind of disposition, by which she was made worthy to be the mother of Christ: and this was the perfection of her sanctification. The second perfection of grace in the Blessed Virgin was through the presence of the Son of God incarnate in her womb. The third

<sup>22</sup> Nicholas of St. Alban, *Epist. Petr. Cell.*, 172; *PL*, CCII, 626–27.

<sup>23</sup> Peter de La Celle, *op. cit.*, *PL*, CCII, 618.

was the perfection of the end which she has in glory. That this second perfection excels the first, and the third the second appears in the first place from the fact of her deliverance from evil. For in her sanctification she was first delivered from original sin; afterwards, in the conception of the Son of God, she was entirely cleansed from passion; lastly, in her glorification, she was delivered from all affliction whatever. It appears in the second place in her disposition to good. For at first in her sanctification she received grace inclining her to good; in the conception of the Son of God she received consummate grace confirming her in good; and in her glorification her grace was further consummated so as to perfect her in the enjoyment of all good.”<sup>24</sup>

John Damascene taught that, in certain respects, Mary’s second sanctification bore the character of ultimate perfection. He writes: “Death perfects the saints and shows them to be blessed by rendering them such that their virtue is no longer subject to any change. But with thee we shall by no means assume this, since neither did death bring thee thy blessedness nor did a change of abode procure thee thy perfection. For with thee the beginning, the mean, and the end of all good, even thy security and true confirmation, was placed in that conception of the seed.”<sup>25</sup> Yet this text too shows that her perfection, which began in her second sanctification, refers mainly to her confirmation in grace, but does not at all exclude the increase of her grace and merit. Accordingly the Scholastics held as a sort of axiom that the *status viae* in Mary kept the mean between Christ and ourselves to the same ex-

<sup>24</sup> St. Thomas, IIIa, q. 27, a. 5 ad 2.

<sup>25</sup> St. John Damascene, *Or. 1 in dormit.*; PG, XCVI, 717.

tent as did the impossibility of her losing grace by sin go hand in hand with the possibility of increasing this grace through merit.<sup>26</sup>

As to the causes of the actual increase of grace in Mary, this increase was effected *ex opere operato* as well as *ex opere operantis*. It came about *ex opere operato*, apart from the conception of the Word, particularly by Mary's participation in the reception of the Holy Ghost on Pentecost, also by the sacraments which she received, more especially the Holy Eucharist. In Mary the effect of the sacraments would be the more potent because, on the one hand, they were only a renewal of the closest union with Christ, solemnized in His conception, and, on the other, they were received with the most perfect dispositions. That Mary received the sacraments is indubitable as regards the Holy Eucharist; as to baptism, it is at least very probable although Mary was in no need of this sacrament to be freed from original sin. Confirmation she received, like the apostles, by the visible descent of the Holy Ghost. She could not receive the remaining sacraments *ex defectu materiae* and *finis*, although, unmindful of her sinlessness, some, even great, theologians have a solution even regarding the sacrament of penance, whereby they aver that Mary could nevertheless receive it, and for that reason they were at some pains to ascertain who her father confessor was.

As regards the increase of grace *ex opere operantis*, that is, through the merit of her acts of virtue, this was so great as to surpass understanding, owing to the exceptionally high degree of her initial sanctifying grace, the

<sup>26</sup> Cf. St. Albert the Great, *Mariale*, q. 134; and Suarez, *De incarn.*, disp. 8, sec. 1.

abundance of her actual grace, and her unfailing, ever-zealous cooperation during her long life. To make this clear, many theologians, as also preachers who adopted their views, attempted formal calculations—only to be lost in the infinite—as to the geometric progression which must have attended Mary's increase of grace. They base their calculations on the axiom, according to which the present degree of grace is doubled by each act in proportion to its intensity, and they then presume that, in the case of Mary, each of her acts possessed that quality. The strict application of mathematical formulas to grace has, in general, something forced about it and easily leads to absurdities. This law in particular concerning the increase of grace is far from certain. Suarez,<sup>27</sup> in his Christology, took it for granted, but later rejected it. Therefore, in the case of Mary, we must restrict ourselves simply to advocating a continuous increase of grace.

#### MARY'S OTHER GIFTS OF GRACE

The supreme fullness of grace which the Church ascribes to the Mother of God implies, in particular, sanctifying grace and those graces essentially connected therewith and appertaining to her perfection, such as the supernatural virtues and the gifts of the Holy Ghost. Many expressions of the Fathers, and particularly the axiom adopted by the Scholastics,<sup>28</sup> are in general to be understood in the sense that any privilege ever granted to a saint is due to Mary also. This explanation does not at all mean all privileges without distinction, but un-

<sup>27</sup> Suarez, *Comm. III, De myst. vitae Chr.*, disp. 18, sec. 4.

<sup>28</sup> See the texts in which this axiom appears in former times in Hurter, *Opuscula selecta Patrum*, II, thesis 156. Cf. Dillenscheider, *La Mariologie de S. Alphonse* (Fribourg, 1934), pp. 197–205.

doubtedly and unconditionally those only which concern the possession, practice, and all-embracing activity of sanctifying grace and the perfect purity and holiness of Mary's life and being. It is altogether inadmissible to explain and use this rule in such wise that, without more ado, any given supernatural privilege is ascribed to Mary regardless of whether the possession of this privilege is fitting from every point of view, particularly in regard to her state of life and her special position and mission.

Without doubt, Mary did not possess all graces *gratis datae* which are ascribed to the ordinary and extraordinary instruments of the Church, such as the *potestas ordinis et jurisdictionis*. On the other hand, through the descent of the Holy Ghost she acquired the gift of prophecy distributed in such abundant measure on that occasion, that is, the gift of prophetic knowledge, of miracles, and also of languages in a degree befitting her special office. Neither may the privileges of the original state be ascribed to her. Like Christ, not only was she subject to suffering and death, but neither had she to possess the knowledge of natural things infused into the first human couple, particularly Adam. There is less reason to accept the opinion that, in regard to the purport and the purely spiritual nature of knowledge, Mary should from the beginning be considered on a level with the angels by supernatural grace.

On the other hand, especially in respect to the perfection of her knowledge, too low a standard must not be applied. Indeed, as to the fullness of truth, Mary's resemblance to Christ during her life cannot be applied in the same way as to her fullness of sanctity. But, under this aspect also, no purely human standard may be applied

in her case as the "Seat of Wisdom," the "new and better Eve," and the "Queen of Angels," viz.: in so far as there is a correlation between the perfection of knowledge and the possession and practice of sanctity. What can be more definitely established concerning this matter is given below.

St. Bernard says only this:—and that in proof of Mary's advanced holiness—"There is certainly no real reason to suspect that what, for instance, was bestowed on a few mortals was denied to a Virgin of such excellence, through whom all mortality came to life."<sup>29</sup> In more general terms, but on the same occasion and in the same sense as St. Bernard, we find St. Thomas' explanation: "It is reasonable to believe that she who brought forth the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, received, in comparison with all others, greater privileges of grace."<sup>30</sup> On the other hand, Raynaud defines the axiom explicitly as follows: "We must not deny the Mother of God the privilege or gift pertaining to sanctifying grace and conducing to a greater sanctity of soul and a more perfect union with God, which we know was bestowed upon some servant of God."<sup>31</sup> Gerson<sup>32</sup> dealt firmly with a too inconsiderate application of the axiom, or with the imaginary rule, that God granted to His Mother all privileges which, in one way or another, could be ornamental to her. See also Raynaud. If even in regard to her sanctifying grace, not the absolutely highest, but only that degree fixed by God's wisdom must be ascribed to Mary, then

<sup>29</sup> St. Bernard, Epist. 174, *PL*, CLXXXII, 334.

<sup>30</sup> St. Thomas, IIIa, q. 27, a. 1 corpus.

<sup>31</sup> Theophile Raynaud, *Dipst. Mar.*, *Prol.*, *cant.* 3.

<sup>32</sup> Gerson, *Epist. de susceptione humanitatis Christi*, Veritas 15 (*Opera omnia*, Paris, 1606, Vol. I, p. 454).

certainly, with such an imaginary rule, nothing certain, not even anything probable, can be established concerning all other privileges, unless other reasons are adduced.

Closely bound up with her sanctifying grace as such is Mary's supernatural knowledge which is, at the same time, the fruit of the enlightening force of grace and the principle of the life of holiness in the will. So far, therefore, as the fullness of holiness is conditioned by the fullness of truth, this latter must be accepted absolutely in Mary's case—at least as probable—in that degree in which a perfection of the faculty of cognition seems to fit in with the perfection of her own holy life or with the discharge of her special calling as Mother of God. Before as well as after Christ's conception, Mary undoubtedly had the most sublime enlightenment relative to God and divine things, more definitely, the Fathers suppose, in regard to her vow of virginity. After Christ's ascension she certainly attained lights concerning her Son, such as no other saint on earth has ever had. From the remark of St. Luke: "And they understood not the word that He spoke to them,"<sup>33</sup> it is evident that even in this respect a relatively imperfect knowledge could exist prior to this time.

All the more is it purely arbitrary to ascribe to her from the beginning, the possession of all natural sciences, or a knowledge of all things similar to that of the angels. These gifts were required neither by her dignity nor by her calling, nor was her holiness dependent upon them. However, after Christ's conception especially, a loftiness of contemplation must be accorded her such as fell to the lot of no other saint on earth. This much, at least, must be con-

<sup>33</sup> Luke 2:50.

ceded, that the highest sort of contemplation, granted to other saints only in passing and in ecstasies, is in Mary's case conceived to be her habitual state; and that with reason, since, like the beatific vision in the case of Christ, it neither took away nor did it presume the use of the exterior senses and, therefore, it continued in waking hours as well as during sleep. Such contemplation is very closely bound up with her perfect cultivation of holiness. Without it, the spiritual resemblance to Christ and the angels, which must be accepted for her earthly life, would be too insignificant. Hence even St. Ambrose in his time stressed this point<sup>34</sup> clearly. For similar reasons the opinion is not too improbable, nor is it so dangerous as some would have it considered that, from the womb of her mother, or even, as in the case of our first parents and the angels, from the first moment of her creation, Mary was endowed supernaturally with the use of her intellect, so that, as His bride, she might from the beginning of her life enter into living communion with God.

Though this opinion has been explicitly defended only since the fourteenth century, its first firm defender being Francis Mayron,<sup>35</sup> while St. Thomas still preferred the opposite view; nevertheless it had already found some supporters among the Fathers as well as in Sacred Scripture. For many of the Fathers ascribe the joyful "leaping" of St. John the Baptist in his mother's womb to a supernatural enlightenment whereby he recognized the

<sup>34</sup> St. Ambrose, *De virginibus*, II, 3; *PL*, XVI, 209: "Cum quiesceret corpus, vigilaret animus, qui frequenter in somnis aut lecta repetit aut somno interrupta continuat."

<sup>35</sup> Francis Mayron, On the attitude of St. Thomas toward this question, see J. Maréchal, *Etudes sur la psychologie des mystiques*, II (Brussels, 1937), 250–54.

presence of the Savior; and on that supposition, the granting of the favor in question to Mary is to be presumed *a fortiori*. In like manner, St. Bernard<sup>36</sup> in his day concluded from the sanctification of the Baptist in his mother's womb, that the same privilege had been conferred on Mary<sup>37</sup> also.

It is much more certain, rather it is not to be doubted that, as regards her spiritual perfection, Mary possessed all the privileges which would have fallen to the lot of the children born in the original state of grace. With regard to the spiritual development of her knowledge, she from the beginning enjoyed freedom from all disturbing influences of sensuality and passion, immunity from which was a privilege of the state of original justice, whereby she remained secure against all error. For the perfection of her knowledge, see especially the conclusive and, on the whole, very moderate exposition of Suarez.<sup>38</sup> St. Albert the Great has a very profound and substantial treatise on the characteristic form and development of the life of grace in Mary.<sup>39</sup>

From Mary's sympathetic cooperation in the work of the redemption—since hers was a moral cooperation in the redeeming sacrifice—and, in general, from the fact that she pursued on earth, as she now does in heaven, an activity directed to the salvation of all men, modern theologians would conclude that, like Christ, Mary had on earth, as she now has in heaven, an intimate knowledge of

<sup>36</sup> St. Bernard, *Epist. 174; PL, CLXXXII, 333*. Also Eadmerus, *Tract. de concept. S. Mariae*, n. 9; Edition of Thurston, p. 9.

<sup>37</sup> On this question see Vasquez, *in 3. p. Sum*, disp. 120; and Suarez, *De inc.*, disp. 4, sec. 7.

<sup>38</sup> Disp. 19, *per totum*.

<sup>39</sup> St. Albert the Great, *Mariale*, solution in questions 44–61, after q. 61.

all those to whom that activity is extended.<sup>40</sup> This is a profound and beautiful thought, which in this form may perhaps appear equally as daring as it is novel. However, it is not only probable but certain, if the idea to be conveyed is that beneath Calvary's cross Mary had not an indefinite and vague idea but, by supernatural enlightenment, a profound and vivid conception of every human soul involved in the great mystery of the redemption. Something similar to this is also found in the life of many of the saints who, in a special manner, were called to cooperate by their prayers and sufferings in the salvation of their fellow men.

<sup>40</sup> Pierre Jeanjacquot, S.J., *Simples explications sur la coopération de la T. S. Vierge à l'œuvre de la rédemption et sur sa qualité de Mère des chrétiens* (Paris, 1868), pp. 152-55.

## CHAPTER II

### Mary's Fullness of Grace Considered Negatively<sup>1</sup>

**S**O LONG as Mary's fullness of grace is considered simply from its positive purport and effects it is inferior to that of Christ, because Mary does not exhaust the entire fullness of grace, nor does she from the beginning possess that plenitude which was later to be attained. On the other hand, Mary's fullness of grace is quite similar to that of Christ's humanity in this, that the substance of grace is appropriated entirely and forever, that is, in its entire being, existence, and essence by the principle of grace with which it is connected, which principle is united to the subject by a "bodily indwelling," thereby penetrating and surrounding it from all sides. In this respect the perfection of Mary's state of grace is better expressed by the emphatic Greek expression *κεχαριτωμένη* than by the Latin *gratia plena*. The Greek version expresses more clearly how Mary was surrounded and penetrated by the light of grace because of her being "clothed" with the "Sun of grace" itself,<sup>2</sup> the effects of which are as certain as they are obvious.

In their operation, these effects are negative. From the start they unconditionally preclude from the subject of

<sup>1</sup> For literature see chapter 1, note 1.

<sup>2</sup> Apoc. 12:1; see St. Bernard, *Sermo s. Missus est*, III, 2; *PL*, CLXXXIII, 72.

grace all evil, fault, stain, deformity, and corruption contrary to its mission, through the anointing with uncreated grace, or through its bodily union with the principle of grace.

As regards the extent, if not the form of these effects, the same rule holds good in the case of Mary as in that of the humanity of Christ. Whatever, by the power of the Logos, had to be unconditionally excluded from Christ's human nature as incompatible with the consecration and dignity of "the flesh of the Word," is also incompatible with the being of Mary in her position as motherly bride of the Logos and of the human nature of Christ. Hence, she also must be effectually safeguarded from all this by the power of the Logos. Thus, from the negative side the old axiom is fully realized: "As the Lamb, so is His mother."<sup>3</sup> This, in its turn, gives only another version of the community of blessedness between Mary and Christ which was proclaimed by Elizabeth in the words "Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb."<sup>4</sup> In this connection the Fathers and theologians rightfully and to the same extent apply both to Christ's humanity and to Mary the symbolical types, "ark of the covenant," the "imperishable setim wood," the "tower of ivory of Solomon," the "cloud of light," and also the spiritual prototype, "Wisdom proceeding from the mouth of God."

The negative side of the "fullness of grace" in Mary comprises in particular the complete preservation or freedom from sin or from whatever is so connected therewith

<sup>3</sup> *Qualis Agnus, talis et mater Agni.* This axiom appears in the apologetic writing against St. Bernard ascribed to Peter Comestor, quoted by Le Bachelot, in *Dict. de theor. cath.*, VII, 1017, 1020.

<sup>4</sup> Luke 1:42.

as in one way or another to mar or deface in man the image of God. Because this "fullness of grace" excludes, in consequence, every sort of violating or desecrating corruption, and at the same time is a grace of perfect integrity and incorruption and especially of perfect purity and innocence, it affects most profoundly the concept of virginity due to the motherly bride of God.

Secondly, the negative side of Mary's "fullness of grace" comprises also a preservation from those evils to which mankind became subject through original sin and from which it was freed by the merits of Christ's redemption, with, of course, the obvious exception of such as were not necessarily excluded from Christ's humanity, but were rather accepted by Him as means of redemption, such as physical suffering and death. But without the merits of Christ's redemption, Mary would have been subject to these penalties. Hence her preservation from them rests also upon a deliverance or safeguarding through the grace of the Redeemer. In her case, however, this preservation did not take the form of a later removal, but rather of an anterior exemption and preservation by the complete restoration and the unchangeable confirmation of the integrity of the original state. According to the words of St. Peter Chrysologus:<sup>5</sup> "All is preserved in the Virgin who brought forth the Redeemer of all mankind"; Mary's fullness of grace is, therefore, a perfect grace of salvation and redemption. In her, as the first fruits of the redemption and the co-adjutrix of the Redeemer in His work of salvation, and as the spiritual mother of all redeemed souls, or the new Eve, this grace must reveal itself in a

<sup>5</sup> St. Peter Chrysologus, *Sermo 144, PL, LII, 586*, reads: *Virgini omnia salva, quae omnium genuit Salvatorem.*

unique, or rather, in an ideal manner in order to represent, guarantee, and communicate the effects of the redemption to all others.

According to the conception of Sacred Scripture and of the Church, the deliverance of mankind from the woe-ful effects of the first sin is also a victory over the power of sin and the devil who, by sin, rules mankind. In like manner, Mary's preservation through the power of Christ from all these evil effects must be regarded as a complete and all-embracing victory over sin and the devil; and this victory, by her fullness of grace, Mary gains through Christ, and Christ in Mary, and by it Mary becomes Christ's most beautiful and splendid trophy of victory. From this point of view, the privileges referred to are contained in the promise of the protevangelium, according to which woman should share with her seed the indomitable and victorious enmity against the devil.

Finally, all these considerations indicate and, in turn, gather force from the fact that Mary's "fullness of grace," considered negatively, is the model and pledge of the fitting supernatural equipment and dowry of the Church, especially of her infallibility and imperishableness. Likewise, these privileges are considered and characterized as a virginal purity and a victorious invincibility opposed to the powers of hell.

In the sense of the principles and considerations as here formulated, the Church ascribes to the Mother of God, in contrast to the rest of mankind, three definite privileges:

1. Complete and perpetual freedom from original sin, because of the sanctifying grace granted to Mary in her very conception;

2. Freedom from all the effects of original sin which, in one way or another, belong to the moral domain, i.e., from all inclination to sin, and in general, from all irregularity connected in the soul with the positive safeguarding against each, even the smallest, personal sin;

3. Freedom from the reign of death, in so far as the latter is a consequence of original sin and the cause of the decomposition of the body; this freedom ensures the anticipated resurrection and glorification of the body.

First, these three privileges define the extent of Mary's grace in her entire being, i.e., in her spirit, her soul, and her body ("the blessing from head to foot," as the Fathers express it), and also in her entire existence, in the beginning, the course and the end of her life on earth.

Secondly, they reflect in a special manner the three privileges of Mary's motherhood: the conception, the indwelling, and the birth of "the cause of grace," and also the three forms of Mary's relationship to God: as daughter, bride, and temple. Thus they answer to the three parts in the salutation of the angel: "full of grace," the Lord is with thee," "blessed are thou among women."<sup>6</sup>

Finally, they contain the total exclusion of the defacement of the divine image, effected in human nature by the first sin, of the "seed of the serpent" as Gregory of Nyssa<sup>7</sup> calls it. As "seed of the serpent," this defacement may be represented under the figure of the serpent insinuating itself into human nature. According to Gregory of Nyssa the disfigurement of spirit is symbolized by

<sup>6</sup> *Gratia plena, Dominus tecum, benedicta tu in mulieribus.* The words, *benedicta tu*, etc., are not found in the best and most ancient Greek manuscripts in the greeting of the angel, but in the salutation of Elizabeth (verse 42).

<sup>7</sup> St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Or. catech.*, c.8; PG, XLV, 33, seed of the serpent.

the head, that of the soul by the body, that of the body by the tail of the serpent, and in this way the privileges in question represent the complete and original inaccessibility of the new Eve to the serpent of sin.

In the following chapters these three privileges will be separately proved, defended, and explained, and at the same time, the necessary principles and observations will be elucidated more completely.

On account of Mary's freedom from actual sin, St. Thomas<sup>8</sup> reduces to three points of view the reasons for the privileges referred to in the divine motherhood, which he arranges in an ascending order, or rather in an order leading from the outside inward:

1. The relation of the mother to the child, or to the Son as her bodily fruit, in so far as the mother must be honored by the Son and the honor of the latter was conditioned by that of the mother;
2. Mary's affinity to Christ, whereby she was united with Him as with her spiritual head;
3. Mary's relation to the Godhead, dwelling bodily within her, whereby she is united with the Godhead in a manner analogous to that of the body with the spirit.

In the sense here given, these points of view concur with those which have been elucidated previously. There is a deficiency in St. Thomas' definition and use of Mary's freedom from actual sin. He does not trace the last point of view to Mary's spiritual marriage and union with the Logos which, antedating the conception of Christ, came about in and with Mary's own conception. In this lies the reason why the application of this aspect to Mary's entire past, especially to her conception, is deficient. In

<sup>8</sup> St. Thomas, IIIa, q. 27, a. 4 corpus.

this connection the first two points of view are not maintained by St. Thomas with the keenness inferring Mary's Immaculate Conception. Considering Christ as her bodily fruit and spiritual head, he yet does not represent Mary according to her entire existence and essence as *inchoatio Christi* and *complementum Christi*.

Touching the question of Mary's Immaculate Conception especially, as well as her bodily assumption into heaven, reasons innumerable have been advanced in support of these privileges. However, they are but variations of the three reasons of St. Thomas; e.g., when, in her relationship as Mother of God, Mary is considered now as daughter, now as bride, now as temple; in relation to Christ, now as root, now as member, now as bridal chamber; and again, when now God's honor, now Mary's own honor is involved.

These reasons derive their real breadth of meaning only from the position of the mother of God towards creatures as mistress and as mother of grace, and by her vocation of closest cooperation in the redemption of mankind and in the victory over the devil. In the meantime, this double group of reasons is elucidated more effectively by the inner analogy of the aforesaid privileges to the miraculous preservation of Mary's bodily virginity which these same reasons demand. And, vice versa, this analogy in connection with these reasons attains the character of a weighty argument.

## CHAPTER III

# Mary's Freedom from Original Sin

### THE DOGMA<sup>1</sup>

T HAS never been questioned that in Mary, as distinguished from other human beings, an anticipated sanctification in one form or another took place. The Gospel narrative of the sanctification of John the Baptist<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For literature see Alexander Halcensis, *Summa*, Part III, q.9. Commentaries on Lombardus, 3 Sept., dist. 3 of St. Bonaventure, St. Thomas, Scotus, and Dionysius the Carthusian; St. Thomas, IIIa, q.27, a.1, 2; also Cajetan, Porrecta, Medina, Gregory of Valeneia, Vasquez, and Suarez; Bened. Plaz Zam, *Causa immaculatae conceptionis ss. Matris Dei Mariae*, Palermo, 1747; Perrone, *De immac. B.V. Mariae conceptione*, Rome, 1847; Passaglia, *De immac. conc.*, Rome, 1854; Malon, *L'immaculée conception*, Lyons, 1890. Many texts from the Fathers are found in Hurter, *theol. dogm. comp.*, Vol. II, theses 156 f. See also X. Le Bachelet, art. "Immaculée Conception," in *Dict. de théol. cath.*, VII, 845-1218 (with the cooperation of M. Jugie for the Eastern Churches).

<sup>2</sup> Some theologians and many of the Fathers add the following to the text of Jeremias (1:5): "Before thou camest forth out of the womb, I sanctified thee," a similar privilege for the prophet. But the explanation of these words is the less necessary since it is hard to see why a special reason for such a privilege would be present in Jeremias' case. The nature of things seems rather to demand that this privilege exists only for such persons as, like Mary and John the Baptist—at most also for St. Joseph—stood in the closest relationship with Christ. When some theologians, including St. Albert the Great, wish to find such a relationship also for Jeremias, because of the fact that he so clearly pointed to Christ in his prophecy, "a woman shall compass a man" (31:22), this seems to be wrong for this reason, if for no other, that the prophecy of Isaías is still clearer and more impressive. We could point out with St. Thomas, that Jeremias in his person must be an entirely special prototype of the suffering Christ. But even this reason is not of such a nature that no equally forceful reasons could be given for other persons, e.g., Mozes.

See also Condamin, *Jérémie fut-il sanctifié avant sa naissance?* in *Rech. de Sc. relig.*, III (1912), 446. The answer is that the sanctification of Jeremias is nothing else than his election to the office of prophet. Buzy, *Saint Jean Baptiste*, Paris, 1922, accepts this explanation for Jeremias (p. 95), not for John the Baptist (pp. 64-83).

in his mother's womb is forced to ascribe *a fortiori* to the mother of Christ a sanctification which at least preceded her birth or her egress from the womb of her mother.

It is well known that after the twelfth century it was a constant point of controversy whether Mary's sanctification was merely an anticipated one, analogous to that of John the Baptist, or whether this privilege must be conceded to the first moment of her existence, that is, to her conception. In the existing order of things, apart from the state of holiness, we find only the state of sin. As in the fallen human race all natural descendants of Adam, because of their lineage, are subject to original sin, the question as to Mary's first sanctification is identical with this other: Was Mary, like other humans, subsequently freed from the stain already contracted, or was she shielded against this stain from her very conception? In this respect the question concerning Mary's original sanctification assumes a very special significance. But here at the same time there resulted a special difficulty, so that the controversy was not merely about the "holy," but about the "immaculate" conception.

After the decisive point of the controversy had for a long time been prepared by many ecclesiastical memoranda, Pius IX solemnly defined in the bull *Ineffabilis providentia* that, as concerned Mary's conception, this freedom from the stain of original sin is a revealed and Catholic truth. The formula of the definition reads: "We define that God has revealed the doctrine holding that, from the first instant of her conception, the most blessed Virgin Mary was preserved immune from all stain of original sin by a singular grace and privilege of Almighty

God, by an intuitive cognition of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the human race.”<sup>3</sup>

As early as 1439 the Council of Basel had ventured a definition in the same sense. This definition, however, was invalid, for the council was schismatic and no sanction of the definition followed on the part of the pope. In view of the contemporary state of the question, that decision was rather premature and was entirely discredited by other audacious steps of the council. The popes and the Council of Trent proceeded much more prudently. Sixtus IV went no farther than to forbid all censure of the belief in the Immaculate Conception, while at the same time he forbade making the denial of it a heresy. He condemned also the assertion that, on the feast of the Conception, the Roman Church celebrated only in general the “spiritual conception and sanctification of the same Virgin.”<sup>4</sup> The Council of Trent, at which the question came up for serious discussion, limited itself to declaring, in its decree regarding original sin: “It is not the intention of the Council to include in this decree concerning original sin the blessed and immaculate Virgin Mary Mother of God, for the constitutions of Pope Sixtus IV of blessed memory are to be observed.”<sup>5</sup>

Pius V condemned a thesis of Baius in which the Immaculate Conception was denied apodictically and, on the strength of which denial, all Mary’s sufferings were declared to be “punishments of original sin.”<sup>6</sup> By a decree of the Inquisition, 1617, Paul V forbade any public

<sup>3</sup> Denzinger, *Ench. Symb.*, no. 1641.

<sup>4</sup> Sixtus IV, Const. “*Grave nimis*,” 1483; Denz., no. 735. See Roskovany, *op. cit.*, I, 122–26; Le Bachelet, *op. cit.*, 1120–24.

<sup>5</sup> Denz., no. 792. See Le Bachelet, 1166–69.

<sup>6</sup> Denz., no. 1073. See Le Bachelet, 1169 f.

defense of the thesis, "that Mary was conceived in original sin."<sup>7</sup> Likewise by decree of the Inquisition, 1622, Gregory XV extended this prohibition to writings and lectures of a private nature, "with the exception of those persons to whom this shall have been especially granted by the Holy and Apostolic See."<sup>8</sup> The Dominicans were here referred to; they were permitted to discuss the thesis among themselves, but not in the presence of others. Finally, Alexander VII declared in his famous bull *Solicitudo omnium ecclesiarum* (1661): "the devotion to the B. V. Mary is indeed of long standing among the followers of Christ who feel that her soul, from the first instant of its creation and infusion into her body, was preserved immune from the stain of original sin by a special grace and privilege of God, by an intuitive cognition of the merits of her Son, Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of the human race, and who, in this sense, esteem and solemnly celebrate the festivity of her conception."<sup>9</sup> According to this declaration Mary's sanctification from the first moment of her existence was authoritatively determined as the object of the feast, the observance of which had now become wide-spread in the Church and was even generally prescribed. By the same decree the liturgical testimony of the universal Church was ensured; in fact, this testimony had already been clearly given by the office of the feast and, for the Roman Church in particular, it had already been fixed by Sixtus IV.<sup>10</sup> Besides, since the conviction of the truth of this article had taken ever

<sup>7</sup> Roskovany, *op. cit.*, II, 5-7; Le Bachelet, 1172.

<sup>8</sup> Roskovany, *op. cit.*, pp. 348 f.; Le Bachelet, 1173.

<sup>9</sup> Denz., no. 1100; Roskovany, *op. cit.*, pp. 381-84; Le Bachelet, 1173-76.

<sup>10</sup> Sixtus IV, Const. *Cum preeexcelsa*, April 29, 1476, approved of the office, drawn up by the friar, Leonardus of Nogarole, in which the present collect appears.

deeper root and all requisite elements were abundantly and emphatically present, the doctrine in those latter years appeared so completely supported by testimonies of the living tradition that, on the strength of these alone, the definition could follow.

It cannot be positively asserted, as is sometimes done, that "the feast of Mary's conception," originally so called, had for its specific object the Immaculate Conception. For in the ancient Church, prior to the celebration of Mary's conception, the Greeks and, in certain localities particularly in Naples and Ravenna, the Latins as well, celebrated "the conception of Christ's Precursor," in whose case also there neither was nor could there be a question of a sanctification of his conception. From the homilies of St. Peter Chrysologus<sup>11</sup> it appears that on this day they commemorated the miracles preceding, accompanying, and following the conception of St. John, to which miracles his sanctification in his mother's womb pertained.<sup>12</sup>

In the Middle Ages a much broader purport was given the feast of Mary's conception which was extended in an analogous manner. Mary's origin in her bodily conception, occurring on that special day of the calendar, was taken as the object of the feast in the following way: this first beginning of the existence of the mother of the Savior was a happy event for which God must be thanked; together with Mary's sanctification, which took place in her mother's womb and the moment of which was not known, it introduced the birth of the Mother of God and

<sup>11</sup> St. Peter Chrysologus, *Serm. 86–92 de annuntiatione et conceptione Jo. Bapt.*; *PL*, LII, 441–60.

<sup>12</sup> Malou, *op. cit.*, chap. 6.

thereby also the preparation for Christ's conception and birth.

This was the view not only of many opponents of the doctrine of Mary's sanctification in the first moment of her existence, who sought thereby to justify or excuse the fact of the feast,<sup>13</sup> but it was held also by some of the advocates of the feast and of the doctrine, who, at least in the beginning, were of the same opinion. For, as object of the feast they indicate: Mary's conception and creation, or also her bodily or human conception, and her spiritual conception. It is found thus in the document relative to the feast ascribed to St. Anselm.<sup>14</sup> But very soon these latter abandoned their theory. Even the above-mentioned document comes round in the end. From that time they limited the object of the feast to the sanctified conception which took place in the creation of the soul itself and which, in virtue of the sanctification of the soul, was coupled with its creation. However, the opponents of the doctrine maintained their point of view. According to them the sanctification only, apart from the conception of the Virgin conceived on that day—which sanctification they called “spiritual conception”—or also the conception of the Virgin subsequently sanctified, formed the object of the feast.

The reason why the Church celebrates only the feasts of things actually holy, is in this case merely conclusive,

<sup>13</sup> Thus St. Bonaventure, *in 3 Sent.*, dist. 3 q.1, a.1; St. Thomas, IIIa, q.27 a.2 ad 3.

<sup>14</sup> Pseudo-Anselm, *Sermo de conceptione B.M.*; *PL*, CLIX (inter spuria S. Anselmi), sec. 322: *Si non placet celebrare dominicae matris conceptionem carnalem, saltem placeat celebrare ejus animae spiritualem creationem*; sec. 325: *utramque ejus conceptionem venerabilem, spiritualem videlicet et humanam*.

since it has been ascertained that the feast was directed, in a very special way, either to the honoring of Mary's person in the first moment of her conception, or to this conception as a holy work of God in itself. Moreover, to this very day the remark of St. Thomas has remained in force, according to which the feast of Mary's sanctification is celebrated on the day of her bodily conception, because the moment of her sanctification is not defined. Concerning this, the Church has so far made no pronouncement, and for that matter it is not theologically established that Mary's soul was infused immediately upon the bodily conception.<sup>15</sup>

#### THE MEANING OF THE PRIVILEGE ACCORDING TO THE DEFINITION

The meaning of the privilege of the Immaculate Conception is defined according to the definition in regard to its subject, purport, ground, and modality as follows:

1. The words, "from the first instant of her conception the blessed Virgin Mary," indicate as subject the person of Mary alone in itself and immediately; therefore not at the same time another person, e.g., her parents, or part of Mary before her completion, and thus the privilege was communicated to the person of Mary. Indeed in the first moment of her conception, that is to say, from the origin of that person in the womb of the mother or, according to the declaration of Alexander VII, "from the creation and infusion of Mary's soul in her body."

When, therefore, in the bull itself and in church history Mary's Immaculate Conception is indicated as the

<sup>15</sup> Concerning this question see Al. Janssens, *God als Schepper* (3rd ed., 1937), Brussels, p. 269.

object of the dogma and subject of the feast, then the conception itself is meant only as subject of the privilege in so far as this privilege is coupled with it, or also in so far as the person endowed with the privilege is as such the object and purport of the action of God which brings it into being, and of Mary's conception in her mother's womb which answers to the divine action.

Conception, therefore, in the sense of the bull, has nothing to do with conception in so far as it means Mary's origin in regard to the activity of the human principle of production directed to this origin. Before all else, the productive activity of the parents at the moment of the conjugal relationship (called active or, better still, generative conception) is in this case entirely beside the question. Beside the question also is the conception of the child, which is at once the object and effect of this action (the passive conception of the seed or the flesh, or also the incomplete conception of the person). The point at issue is that conception which, as distinct from both these forms, is called by the more modern Fathers, "adequate passive conception"; by the earlier defenders of the doctrine in the Middle Ages, "conception of the bud" (as contrasted with conception of the seed) or "spiritual conception," or again "personal conception," sometimes also "conception of life," in contrast with conception of the flesh. This conception concurs with the birth in the womb.

But neither is this passive conception of the person here under consideration, in so far as it is the formal end and result of the generative conception, or of the conception of the seed, as if the privilege were connected with or transferred by that conception, or merely included it as well. Rather, a complete abstraction is made of the

connection between the origin of the person conceived and the productive principles, or in general, of the relation of Mary's origin to its causes. The person who comes into being, is thereby considered apart.

Mary's person as such, since it comes into existence by the creation and infusion of the soul on the part of God, has its origin in the same principle from which the privilege sprung. Both these divine actions are mutually connected so as to form one divine action. In this way, therefore, it may be said that the privilege is also formally connected with Mary's origin from God, and hence it comes into existence because of her origin, i.e., because of the decree which effects her origin.

From the viewpoint of the origin of the soul from God, one can also speak of a conception of Mary by God (*conceptio divina*, i.e., *a Deo*) as contrasted with human conception (*conceptio humana*, i.e., *ab homine*). In this way the immaculateness of the conception can be brought into connection with the divine conception as such. Hence it may be said that in Mary the divine conception is divine and immaculate not only because it proceeds from God, but also because it makes the person conceived holy and immaculate in her origin. Consequently it secures her against that unworthiness and stigma which the human conception, taking place in fallen nature, transfers to the person conceived.

If, therefore, one wishes to consider Mary's conception specifically in one of these three senses as a human conception, as was often done in the Middle Ages, one would speak, without actual contradiction of the dogma, not of an immaculate, but of a tainted, conception of Mary. Without the express addition of this modification, this

manner of speaking would nowadays be ambiguous and confusing.

Likewise the direct purport of the definition could be expressed by the formula, conception of the immaculate Virgin. With this formula the theological opponents of our doctrine formerly indicated the object of the feast, in so far as the immaculateness of the Virgin is taken as absolute, dating from the moment of her conception. But in that case, if this formula is correctly understood, the formula, immaculate conception, sanctioned by the liturgy of the Church must prevail.

2. The words, "was preserved immune from all stain of the original sin," indicate the purport of the privilege to be this, that from the first moment of her existence Mary was exempted from the stain of original sin, even before the latter could come into effect. Thereby at least it is stated that the sanctifying grace, granted the Virgin in the first instant of her existence, excluded completely the formal essence of original sin; moreover, what is ecclesiastically established concerning Mary's specific grace of sanctification, that in the first moment of her existence the state of original sanctity and justice, and not that of original sin, was granted the Virgin in so far as that state is contained in this concept. In consequence, all defects and blemishes belonging materially to the essence of original sin were excluded. On the other hand the definition in no way requires that Mary did not sin in Adam even ideally, that is to say, that Adam's personal sin, which as sin of the head affects also the members, could as such in no wise implicate Mary, hence that Mary did not fall, even outwardly, under the shadow of that sin. The immediate issue is rather this, that Adam's state of sin, per-

petuated in his descendants as an innate stain, is not transferred to Mary effectively. The definition does not exclude this extension of the privilege; in a way, it can even be understood under the "preservation from *all* stain."

The "preservation from the stain of sin" takes place formally by sanctification, i.e., the granting of sanctity, but for that reason also by purification, i.e., the granting of purity. For sanctity is in reality a supernatural purity and, conversely, the purity by which the stain of original sin was excluded is not the mere denial of a taint, but is indeed something very positive, such as purity, that is, the radiance of the light and of the objects illuminated by it.

On the other hand the concept of preservation becomes obscure, if the granting of freedom from the stain of sin is explained simply as a purification from the stain of sin. It is self-evident that this would mean a liberation from the stain already contracted. In the present case, because the preservation as such is also a redeeming liberation and a liberating redemption, there certainly is a liberating purification from sin. To express oneself correctly, this liberating purification must, therefore, be presented as a "preceding purification" (*praemundatio, praepurgatio*). This expression, perhaps not specifically in the present meaning, was already used by Gregory of Nazianzus and Sophronius of Jerusalem.<sup>16</sup> From what follows it is evident that, in this case, a liberation from sin really takes place, including the manner in which it is accomplished.

### 3. The words, "by an intuitive cognition of the merits

<sup>16</sup> St. Gregory of Naz., Hom. 38 in *Theophania*, n. 13; PG, XXXVI, 326; St. Sophronius of Jerusalem, *Or. 2 in s. Deiparae annunt.*, 25; PG, LXXXVII (III), 3243.

of Jesus Christ, the Savior of the human race," indicate the ground on which the granting of this privilege is based. In Mary's case, no less than in that of others to whom it was later granted, this liberation from the stain of original sin must be referred to the merits of salvation through the Redeemer. This, of course, presupposes that Mary too stood in need of this merit of redemption in order to obtain freedom from stain, and that, in her case, therefore, the necessity of being subject to this stigma would have existed, had not Christ gained her freedom from it. Hence the liberation from the stain ever bears the essential mark of a liberating, saving or redeeming action. Through it Mary was saved from an evil not already present, but imminent; she was liberated and redeemed from the necessity of incurring that evil. In colloquial language, not only the removal of a present evil, but also the prevention from an imminent evil is considered a salvation and redemption. Hence Mary's liberation from the stain of original sin can also be called a salvation and redemption. In this case, salvation and redemption may in no way be conceived in the vague and indefinite sense in which one speaks of salvation from a danger or an evil which menaces only in one way or another, e.g., from outside, and which results only from some future act. Here the point at issue is the salvation from a necessity of contracting a certain evil, which necessity is inherent in the subject; more fully, from such a "necessity" whereby, owing to his origin and connection with a tainted parent root, and with a guilty ancestor, the subject is bound (*constrictum et obligatum*) by the actually existing laws of solidarity and oneness. In this way the necessity of contracting a certain evil is reduced to a subjection which exists by

right (*obnoxium esse*). Hence theologians of later date do not really speak in this case abstractly of a "necessity," but of a "debt of incurring the stain" (*debitum incurrendi maculam*), or rather of "contracting the stain together with one's nature" (*contrahendi, trahendi cum natura maculam*), or also of "being born with the stain" (*nascendi cum macula*).

Since Cajetan's time the opponents of the now defined doctrine, the more moderate at any rate, admit that in the supposition of a "debt of incurring the stain," the preservation from original sin in Mary's case could really bear the "character of a salvation and liberation" and, therefore, of an effect of the grace of redemption. On the other hand, prior to the definition, all theologians were agreed, that such a debt (*debitum*) must be accepted in one form or another in order to understand Mary's liberation from original sin as a grace of redemption. Concerning the form in which this debt should be accepted, they were divided. Some held an immediate, others a remote debt. By an immediate debt of incurring the stain, most of them understand the necessity which, by reason of the imaginary complicity of the whole race in Adam's actual sin, brings the result, in and by its origin, that every member of the race is deprived of the sanctity and justice forfeited and lost through that debt. Consequently it is an unworthiness or moral unfitness of possessing this grace. In Mary this necessity is offset by the grace of redemption precisely in the fact that through this grace the forfeited sanctity and justice are nevertheless granted to her person in the first moment of her existence. In this case Christ's grace of redemption naturally acts in Mary, as in others, not as meriting only, but also as formally

atoning and conciliating. Accordingly the only difference between Mary and the other children of Adam is that this justifying grace was granted her before the guilt, which the grace was to wipe out, could be incurred, and the preservation from the stain of sin was, therefore, effected only by an anterior justification.

Since such a debt would always cast, as it were, a shadow of the sin of the whole human race on the holiest among all creatures, and would place the new Eve in a state of dependence upon the old Adam, who is unworthy of her, hence this debt seemed to other theologians intolerable in connection with Mary. Therefore, in order to do justice to the concept of the grace of redemption, these latter tried so to construe the debt that Mary's implication in the sin of the race would be obviated as much as possible.<sup>17</sup> The first group of theologians reduced this implication in the sin of Adam to a nominal participation only and to a condition, in consequence of which the taint would necessarily have been transmitted immediately, had not this been prevented by an anterior infusion of grace. The second group of theologians also excluded in part the nominal participation in Adam's sin and accepted only such a debt, by reason of which the immediate debt, advocated by the first group, would have operated, had not God prevented it by a special privilege.

This was effected mainly in a twofold form. Some accepted a divine influence on the elements or principles of Mary's being, which influence preceded the completion of her person as member of the race. The outcome of this divine influence was that her person in itself, as it

<sup>17</sup> About the different theories concerning the *debitum* in Mary, see Le Bachelet, *op. cit.*, sec. 1156–60.

exists in reality, would not be immediately subject to the debt of incurring the stain. For by it she was so separated and freed from the tainted root, that its influence could not extend to her person. Hence the debt was here a remote debt, in so far as it was turned away from Mary's person, and limited to its principles, without at the same time limiting in itself the tendency of the original sin to include Mary also. Others went back to the tainted root itself. In the pact, or rather in the law whereby God appointed Adam the normal head and representative of the whole race originating with him, they argued that, because of Christ's merits, God excluded Christ's mother from this law given for all, and, therefore, under this aspect made her entirely independent of Adam. These theologians accepted in consequence only a debt of incurring the stain in this sense, that, according to her being and origin, Mary was a child of Adam, and because of her natural connection with him she herself was, like all other human beings, subject to all laws governing the race and, therefore, to that law also involving a participation in Adam's sin, in so far, at least, as God did not withhold her beforehand from such participation.

This theory also is presented under a twofold form, according to the manner in which Mary's predestination is conceived in relation to that of Christ. In the one case they start from the premise that only *in concreto* is Mary predestined as Mother of the Redeemer of sinful mankind. In that case Christ's redeeming death operated for her, not indeed as in satisfaction, but only as meriting; while Christ's death still remained the foundation of Mary's privilege. In the other case, they say that Mary, as mother of Christ, is absolutely predestined with Him,

Irrespective of the decree of redemption, and thus before and independently of Christ's redeeming death.

The opinion for the immediate debt was prevalent up to the sixteenth century and the outset of the seventeenth; but it is by no means sanctioned by the definition, as some, e.g., Malou, thought. Any leaning in that direction was lacking in the pope's views, as he expressly declared when questioned. Such an opinion could hardly be expected, since by its general expression the Council of Trent had sanctioned the exclusion of Mary from every formal participation in the sin of Adam. In the last few centuries, together with the maintaining of the immaculate conception, the denial of the immediate debt had also become more universal. Hence, dogmatically this debt may be regarded as limited, the more so since, on the other hand, the bull speaks of a preservation "from all stain." This does not necessarily imply that the denial of an immediate debt under every form is dogmatically and theologically permissible. What is more important is, whether the establishing of the remote debt makes a real liberation possible.

The view favoring the remote debt, under the first form, was advocated in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. It associated itself with the prevailing conception of the physically organic propagation of original sin, on the analogy of the heredity of natural qualities. It was combatted by all the great theologians of the thirteenth century and later was almost entirely dropped. It is indeed scarcely tenable. Instead of conceding that Mary's nature, that is, her being, in so far as it is the fruit of human propagation, was sanctified by her person, that is, her spiritual soul, it based the sanctification of the per-

son on an antecedent purification of her nature in its material and effective principles.

As early as the Middle Ages the second form likewise was implicitly advanced, though not by Scotus,<sup>18</sup> as we may gather from his theory concerning the absolute predestination of Christ. Instead, it was the work of the unknown author of a defense written against the letter of St. Bernard. It was not till the middle of the sixteenth century that it was brought into prominence by the Dominican, Ambrogio Catarino, and again in the beginning of the seventeenth century by the school of Toledo, from which it spread rapidly. It can at best be defended only in the first presentation. For that purpose it must be observed that the oration of the feast describes the expression, "by an intuitive cognition of the merits of Jesus Christ," in the words, "by foreseeing the death of the Son." On the other hand, the very text of the bull itself speaks of the merits of the Redeemer and explains the preservation as follows: "Mary was redeemed in a more excellent manner." Indeed, the most decided advocates of the second view explicitly declare that "Mary's grace is not a proper grace of redemption or a grace of the Redeemer, but a grace of the Creator." Therefore, irrespective of sin and its redemption, whereby grace is granted to spiritual creatures for the sake of Christ, Mary would have been accorded this grace because of the decree contained in the Creator's plan of the world.

<sup>18</sup> See Balic, "La prédestination de la T. S. Vierge dans la doctrine de Jean Duns Scot," in *La France Franciscaine*, 3rd series, XIX (*Rech. de théol., philos., hist.*, 1936), 114–58. Scotus himself has not a single word concerning this matter (pp. 114, 154). A first indication in that sense appears in Jean de Bassoly (pp. 115 ff.), a disciple of Scotus. The idea is again taken up in the sixteenth century, at the suggestion of Suarez (p. 115).

But again, the first presentation, as expounded by some theologians, or rather, as it was generally understood at that time, was that, through the grace of the Creator, Mary remained untainted by original sin, in so far as the grace, granted the human race as a common possession in Adam, had not been forfeited and lost for her. If at the same time it is admitted, as it was by most of these theologians, that the first grace was not granted for the sake of Christ, here also, the concept of the redeeming grace is with difficulty maintained.

For a serious discussion two only of the opinions advanced are considered. The one holds to the immediate debt; the other excludes the immediate debt on the ground that, in Mary's case, it implies an exemption from the law of solidarity with Adam, this exemption being effected by Christ's redeeming death. The difficulties attending both these views can be avoided by establishing with more precision the relation of Mary's preservation from sin to the grace of her motherhood, and the relation of this grace to her person. This would result in another and easier formulation of the debt.

4. Finally the words, "by a singular grace and privilege of Almighty God," determine the character of the privilege indicated. This privilege was granted, not according to a general law, but by way of a gracious exception to the law, indeed, by an entirely unique exception. This designation precludes the possibility of drawing from the privilege any erroneous conclusions against the universality of original sin, or conversely, of establishing a prejudice against this privilege because of the universality of original sin.

### MARY'S CONCEPTION COMPARED WITH THAT OF CHRIST AND OF OTHER HUMAN BEINGS

According to the aforesaid statements, Mary's conception or origin stands between that of ordinary mortals and that of Christ's humanity, just as Mary was to be the connecting link joining the old with the new creation in Christ.<sup>19</sup> Mary has this in common with the conception of ordinary mortals, that her body was formed by natural propagation, and her person was constituted by the infusion of her human soul into her body. With the conception of Christ it has this in common, that her soul and body, her body through her soul, were sanctified in a supernatural manner at the moment of their union with each other, their sanctification taking place because of the union with a divine person, and that thus they came into existence without sin.

In Christ's conception the contracting of sin was radically and essentially excluded, on the one hand by the supernatural origin of His flesh and, on the other, by the supernatural essence of His person. In that of Mary the contracting of sin was excluded only by a special grace precluding in her case the consequences of her natural origin, and in view of her election and consecration as Mother of God. This grace was granted her in the creation and infusion of her soul in order to prepare and worthily initiate the conception of Christ, which was to be accomplished in her.

Because Mary's holiness rests on the intimate relation of her conception to that of Christ, the closest mutual

<sup>19</sup> From this point of view even Luther developed our doctrine very beautifully, and that in the year 1527 in his *Kirchenpostille*. See edition of Luther's works by J. G. Walch, XI (Halle, 1745), 2614 ff.

relations exist between the holiness of both conceptions. It may be said that in the conception of Mary the divine creation of her soul corresponds to the sacred forming of the flesh in the conception of Christ. For, as the bodily virginity of the mother is preserved immune in Christ's conception by the action of the Holy Ghost, so also is her spiritual virginity effected by the same Holy Spirit. Furthermore, by reason of the original holiness of Mary's soul, which sanctified her body, the human flesh assumed by Christ, although derived from a sin-stained race, was nevertheless untainted in the person of her from whom it was immediately derived. Finally, through the action of the Holy Ghost, Mary, through the original holiness of her soul, was disposed to act, in conjunction with this Holy Spirit, as His instrument in the formation of the flesh of Christ.

#### THE APPROPRIATENESS OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

Hence it follows, how highly befitting to Mary is the privilege of the immaculate conception because of her original and hallowed destiny as Mother of God. The appropriateness is so striking, that the more the attention of the faithful was directed to this privilege, the more the lack of it appeared to them as unthinkable, altogether incompatible with the honor of God and of Christ, with Mary's own dignity and her destiny as queen of angels and spiritual mother of men.

So long as Mary's original destiny as Mother of God is conceived only in a general way, it cannot be said that, essentially and unconditionally, it demanded a permanent freedom from all inherited or personal sin previous

to the beginning of her motherhood, and that, therefore, it contained a metaphysically cogent proof of this privilege. On the other hand, the fitness of this privilege is at once seen to be an absolute necessity if, as has been already explained, Mary's original destiny as Mother of God is conceived positively under the concrete form, the distinguishing mark of her person being the grace of motherhood, viz., a bridal, or spiritual and matrimonial association and union of Mary with God and Christ, accomplished in and with the creation of Mary's person. For, in virtue of this concept, at the moment of her own conception when God took possession of her soul, Mary appears as holy and inviolate a virgin as at and after the conception of Christ. For that reason she possesses such a consecration as is altogether incompatible with defilement by sin.

Consequently all other expressions which contain or suppose the distinguishing mark of Mary's person in the sense indicated, such as "child of God," "daughter of God," and "true Eve," not only point to the supreme fitness of Mary's Immaculate Conception, but also demand it as an essential quality of the person specified. If the expressions, "holy virgin," "daughter of God," and "true Eve," are understood in the full meaning which can and must be given them, they embrace the Immaculate Conception even analytically; for they essentially include the original purity, the holiness, and the supernatural life of their subject.

Accordingly, from this point of view the grace of Mary's Immaculate Conception in relation to the merit of Christ's redemption can be determined more correctly.

Although this grace necessarily results from that of

the divine motherhood, which was granted Mary by virtue of the decree of creation determining the existence of her person, nevertheless the one grace, as and in the other, is a fruit of the merits of the Redeemer; because Mary is predestined, not abstractly as Mother of Christ, but as Mother of the Redeemer. Therefore she could and should obtain these graces only by reason of the merits of the Redeemer, which merits contain all graces granted mankind after the Fall. If, therefore, at first sight, the grace in question could and should be called a grace of the Creator—the more so since it concerns the establishment of a new and higher creation—it is so only in so far as it can really be called, at the same time, a grace of the Redeemer.

Whereas in the Virgin the merits of the Redeemer effect the freedom from the stain of sin in and with the grace of motherhood, they achieve this result not only because this freedom is realized by sanctifying grace, granted at the first moment together with the grace of conception, but also because it is effected by the grace of the motherhood, granted in and with the creation of Mary's person. By this last grace the freedom from sin is so effected that it rests on the original and most intimate union of Mary's person with God and with Christ. Owing to her origin through the decree of the Creator, this union embraces Mary's entire being in such a way that neither in the chronological order nor simply in the natural order was she more closely allied to the race of Adam by the union of the soul with the body, than she was with God and Christ by her divine state as bride. Rather was she created as daughter of Adam for the sole reason that she was destined to be the Mother of the Redeemer, and conse-

quently her bodily relation to Adam from the beginning is entirely subservient to her bodily relation to Christ.

Such being the case, her bodily relation to Adam, as opposed to her bodily relation to Christ, can in no wise assert itself. The latter completely paralyses it in advance. Hence it follows that in Mary Christ's grace of redemption not only precluded the actual incurring of the universal stain of sin, but it also canceled in her regard all share in humanity's common debt through Adam's transgression, and with it the necessity also, as well as the possibility, of incurring the stain of sin.

Consequently, owing to the merit of Christ's redemption, it cannot be said that Mary sinned in Adam. "To sin in Adam" means in its natural and complete sense that, as Adam is head of the human race, each member of that race, being dependent on him, is for that very reason liable to a share in the common heritage of sin. It cannot be said that Mary is so represented in the person of Adam as having the latter as her head, and that, as to the charge of sin, she is so dependent on him that for that reason she became liable to a share in his guilt and hence incurred a reproach and a disqualification. Now, on the strength of the proper character of her origin, Mary is not dependent on Adam in the same way as are other human beings. If, as daughter of Adam, she had apparently to fall under the shadow of his guilt and had to become unfit for grace because of his sin, nevertheless, as member of Christ, there could be no question in the sight of God of her perfect worthiness of all grace. Briefly, therefore, and without restriction, it may be said that Adam sinned for Mary also, in other words that, by his sin he forfeited and lost for her also the original justice, which through him

she would have inherited; that, in so far as the original justice is concerned, Mary in common with the whole human race was, through the sin of Adam, rendered unworthy of grace because of the loss of this original justice.

Mary's relation to the debt of having to incur the stain, which is to be supposed for her redemption, may perhaps be most fitly expressed as follows: If we consider Mary's person in itself, materially, abstractly and *secundum quid*, that is, according to her human origin and being as the product of natural propagation, or according to the nature which is hers in common with the rest of mankind, and by which she stands in relation to Adam, it is subject to the law of the community of sin and exposed to its toils. But considered formally and concretely, that is, according to the supernatural distinguishing mark of her person, or as this particular consecrated person, being the product of a special decree of God's creation, she is exempted from this law, and the bonds of sin have no hold upon her.

The first part takes into account the truth contained in the statement of the proximate debt. The second so limits this proximate debt that not only does it remain ineffective, but is also of itself rendered powerless. This obviates the necessity of introducing a special reservation in the divine enactment of the law of solidarity between Adam and his posterity exonerating Mary from all obligation to this law. The law can and must hold even for Mary, in so far as she comes under the conditions of the law, that is, in so far as she is a product and member of the race which sprang from Adam. The applicability of the law to Mary is annulled for the one reason that, owing to her origin through the ordinance of God, she comes into ex-

istence not merely as a product and member of the first Adam, but as root and member of the heavenly Adam. The debt to be excluded should rather be called the formal debt than the proximate debt; and the debt to be accepted, should rather be called the material debt (instead of the remote debt).

Whatever the scientific formulation may be, the liturgy of the Church requires in any case that the immaculate origin of Mary, like the origin of the Church, should be conceived, in the sense of the Canticle of Canticles, as "a pillar of smoke of aromatical spices" ascending from the sacrifice of Christ and, like the coming forth of the eternal Wisdom, according to Ecclesiasticus, as "the cloud of light from the mouth of the most High."<sup>20</sup> This double figure and the double parallel give, in general, the most suggestive and excellent presentation of Mary's immaculate origin. They present the latter as the origin of the mother of grace, of life, and of light from the side of Christ and the spiritual womb of God. Thus does Mary in her origin appear as the dove of Christ and of God, and as the daughter of grace, of life, and of light.

<sup>20</sup> Cant. 3:6; Eccl. 24:5.

## CHAPTER IV

### Proof of the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception from Sacred Scripture

SACRED Scripture makes no formal pronouncement concerning this dogma. Mary's privileges and position, as pictured in the protevangelium and in the salutation of the angel together with that of Elizabeth,<sup>1</sup> of necessity point to Mary's Immaculate Conception, not only as a theological conclusion, but as pertaining to the completeness of the immediate purpose. For had Mary for even an instant been subject to original sin, then her presupposed cooperation with Christ in His victorious enmity against the devil and in the unique blessing of salvation He brought to all men, would be untenable. By way of supplement, the doctrine can be proved clearly enough from the Canticle of Canticles, from the texts of the psalms relating to the holy city and the tabernacle of God, and also from the figure of Esther.

In connection with the protevangelium<sup>2</sup> it should be especially noted that, even before the announcement of the punishment of our first parents and their descendants, Mary was promised together with her Son and was at the same time placed in such a position as to seem unallied to the sinful race. As to the text itself, it is quite unnecessary

<sup>1</sup> Gen. 3:15; Luke 1:28, 42.

<sup>2</sup> For the application of Gen. 3:15 to Mary, see Vol. I, appendix 1.

for our purpose to hold the feminine form in the Vulgate, "*ipsa conteret*" ("she shall crush"), as in the original wording of the text. It is sufficient that the purport of this ecclesiastically authentic extract is contained in the sense of the original, which demands a victorious enmity against the devil, and points out the woman and her seed.

It is difficult to accept the opinion that the head of the serpent formally means the sin, brought into the world by the serpent. It points rather to the dominion of the devil established by sin, and only indirectly to that sin itself as title and means for this dominion. On the other hand, the meaning of the text becomes more natural and significant if by the seed of the serpent is understood, not sinners, but the sin itself, in particular the sin of this (terrestrial) world which, through the medium of the first woman, is born from it in Adam; in other words, the sin of mankind in the sense of Rom. 5:12 and John 1:29, by which and in which all mankind falls under the dominion of the devil. However, for our purpose even this explanation is unnecessary.

Under this supposition, Mary in union with Christ is placed in opposition to the devil, and they are a human couple whom he would assail indeed, but whom, unlike that first couple, he would fail to conquer; on the contrary, he would himself suffer defeat at their hands. According to the original text the victory over the devil is ascribed in the first place to Christ, as a work of His own power. Still, in that enmity the woman generally comes first, because the victory of the devil had first to be frustrated in the woman and through her turned into shame, since the victory was first gained over the woman, and attained its extension through her. So unconquerable and

victorious an enmity in union with Christ, by which the devil had to be punished for the seduction of man and had especially to be put to shame for the deception of the woman, evidently precludes on Mary's part any connection whatsoever with the devil or any subjection to his power. It rather demands that, from the first moment of her existence, Mary with Christ was exempt from all domination of the Evil One.

This promise of a complete and permanent union between Mary and Christ finds confirmation in the salutation of Elizabeth, in which, as "blessed among women," Mary is united with the "blessed fruit of her womb."<sup>3</sup> In connection with the protovangelium especially, must this community of blessings be conceived as a community of permanent blessing, inasmuch as it forms a community for the imparting of grace. Had Mary, like other women, been subject to the curse for even an instant, this claim to an emphatic union of her blessing with that of Christ would have been illogical.

Hence, in connection with both texts, the express meaning of the "Hail, full of grace" in the salutation of the angel is so clearly defined that the permanence of the state of grace must necessarily be included. For only through that state of grace can Mary appear with and next to Christ, as the triumphant vanquisher of the devil and the source of blessing to men. And, as has been observed above, the Greek expression for "full of grace" is still clearer and more significant. It characterizes Mary briefly as the person to whom grace has been granted, i.e., one of whom grace has taken possession in a unique and perfect manner.

<sup>3</sup> Luke 1:42.

The expression, "the Lord is with thee," has a meaning equally comprehensive. Under the circumstances it must necessarily signify both a permanent union with God and a permanent and most perfect protection of God. All these texts taken together ascribe to the Mother of Christ at least such an exceptional position that permanent freedom from sin must be presumed, so long as it is not proved by manifest and special reasons that this privilege is non-existent. Such reasons do not exist. The only temporary and partly interrupted ecclesiastical conception of these texts speaks rather against the limiting of their natural import.

Here belong those two texts from the Canticle of Canticles, which, in figure, directly and definitely describe Mary's origin. In the first, the "blessed among women," in contradistinction to other women, is presented as a "lily among thorns," like Christ as the apple-tree among the fruitless trees of the forest. In the second, Mary, as distinguished from the rest of mankind to whom grace is granted, is described under the figure of the "morning rising," as an altogether heavenly being of light.<sup>4</sup>

To these texts belong also those which were always applied to Mary, viz., those referring to the origin and beauty of the Church.<sup>5</sup> On account of the organic and mutual relation between Mary and the Church, they can rightly and with perfect truth be applied to the Mother of God as well. Understood in this way, they strikingly express Mary's utter and original stainlessness. As the Church, in this connection, is represented as a bride who is sanctified because of her origin from Christ's sacrifice, or by "her coming from Libanon," and who in conse-

<sup>4</sup> Cant. 2:2 f.; 6:9.

<sup>5</sup> Cant. 3:6; 4:1 ff.

quence is all beautiful and immaculate; so Mary, the personal prototype of the Church, must likewise be considered as sanctified in and by her personal origin from God, and this not as being purified later, but as spotless from the beginning, hence a perfectly immaculate bride. Here also the figures of the “garden enclosed” and “the fountain sealed up” signify the permanent, complete, the spiritually pure and inviolate state of Mary’s soul, rather than the virginity of her body.<sup>6</sup> At the same time they show clearly how Mary’s ever inviolate purity is closely bound up with her position as mother of the life of grace.

From the beginning of the controversy the advocates of the Immaculate Conception, with special predilection, used the texts from the psalms referring to the establishment, sanctification, and protection of the holy city and the temple of God. In this way the inherent necessity and fitness of Mary’s permanent holiness was brought out more clearly. Among others, the charming figure of Esther might also be used as an exegetical demonstration. Passaglia used it learnedly.<sup>7</sup> The evidently typical psalm 117 most probably has as its subject the liberation of the Jews by Mardochai and Esther. The Apostle seems also to have borrowed from the frustration of Aman’s evil plot the colors with which he paints the victory of Christ over the devil. If the whole history is taken as typical, Esther must be a figure of Mary. As such she appears especially in the words of the king: “Thou shalt not die: for this law is not made for thee, but for all others.”<sup>8</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Cant. 4:12. See the beautiful application of this text in Pseudo-Jerome, *Epist. Cogitis me* (5th lesson of the office on December 8); *PL*, XXX, 131.

<sup>7</sup> Passaglia, *op. cit.*, sec. 5, c. 3, who champions (art. 1 and 2) the explanation of Ps. 117 and Col. 2:13–16 as given in the text.

<sup>8</sup> Esther 25:13.

### THE TEACHING OF TRADITION PRIOR TO THE CONTROVERSY

The testimony of tradition for the doctrine must not be limited to those texts which more or less emphatically elucidate the pure origin of Mary. In the first place the universal presentation of Mary's holiness and of her position in the order of grace, which dominates the entire tradition, must be pointed out. It contains two thoughts in particular, which always and everywhere were at least fundamentally acknowledged, and which evidently include the initial freedom from original sin: 1. the thought of the complete and perfect purity and stainlessness of the virginal Mother of God; 2. the thought of the new and better Eve, that is, the bride of the divine Adam and the heavenly mother of mankind.

It can also be shown that as early as the fourth century the belief in Mary's original freedom from the sin of Adam was deep-rooted in the consciousness of the Church and even of the people in most widely separated sections of the Church. In all the Eastern Churches this belief continued without contradiction. It is evidenced in the feast of the Conception of St. Ann, accepted at a very early date, and in numerous dogmatic documents. Later, in the West, though fewer traces are found of this belief, there is no emphatic denial of it till the twelfth century when, with the attempts to introduce the feast of the Conception of Mary, the famous controversy on this subject was evoked by the seeming contradiction between the purport of this feast and the dogma of the universality of original sin.

1. The first idea which is here considered, regarding

the complete and perfect purity of the Mother of God, finds expression in this sentence of St. Anselm<sup>9</sup> at the beginning of the bull *Ineffabilis*: "It was fitting that a purity, greater than which cannot be found outside of God, should shine in the Virgin. For, to the Virgin, God the Father decreed to give His only Son whom, begotten from Himself as His equal, He heartily loved as Himself; and from the Virgin the Holy Ghost willed and effected, that this only begotten Son of the Father from whom He Himself proceeded, should be conceived and born." This sentence is only the echo of a host of witnesses from former centuries who, insisting on the appropriateness, or rather, the ideal necessity of this quality, advocated the reality of this exalted and divine purity and attested their convictions in manifold expressions, colorings, figures and comparisons.<sup>10</sup> And they gave no indication that this purity would subsequently be raised to such a level as would suppose some previous deficiency, though some such suggestion may possibly be found in the writings of St. Anselm himself.<sup>11</sup>

Of itself it is conceivable, so the opponents of the doctrine thought, that, with a subsequent sanctification, there could be question of a complete purity which excelled even that of the angels, viz., in so far as this purity is contained formally and directly in the highest degree of the positive holiness once received. Still, with this sublime godlike purity, and especially with absolute stainlessness, we involuntarily think of enduring purity. With this the opponents themselves connected the idea, when they considered permanent freedom from all personal

<sup>9</sup> St. Anselm, *De conceptu virginali*, chap. 18; *PL*, CLVIII, 451.

<sup>10</sup> See Passaglia, *op. cit.*, the whole of sec. 2.

<sup>11</sup> On St. Anselm's attitude, see Le Bachelet, *op. cit.*

sins as due to the purity of the Mother of God, or when they conceded her this privilege. Consequently they should have either accepted permanent freedom from original sin, or abandoned the proof which they drew from this principle for the permanent freedom from actual sins. So long as they did not do this, and the idea of doing so occurred to no one, they themselves bore witness to the unconditional and complete validity of the principle.

It is evident from the following points, that, in the sense of tradition, the permanent freedom from *all* sins is contained in the title of Mary's immaculateness:

a. Immaculateness is always ascribed to Mary as to the perpetual virgin. It thus forms a whole with bodily integrity and must, therefore, be understood in the same way, namely, as excluding every violation or stain. St. Ambrose writes: "Seek thy sheep, not through thy manservants nor through thy hirelings, but by thyself. Receive me in that flesh which fell in Adam (by assuming my flesh, but) receive me not from Sara but from Mary, because she is a virgin not only uncorrupted, but a virgin untouched by all stain of sin."<sup>12</sup> The meaning of this turn of phrase can be rendered in different ways. The simplest is this: because she from whom thou takest me is obviously or to such a degree an uncorrupted virgin, not only because of her corporeal incorruption, but also

<sup>12</sup> St. Ambrose, *Quaerere ovem tuam jam non per servulos, non per mercenarios sed per temetipsum. Suscipe me in (ipsa) carne quae in Adam lapsa est (assumendo carnem meam; sed) suscipe me non ex Sara sed ex Maria, ut incorrupta sit virgo, sed virgo ab omni integra labe peccati.* The meaning of this sentence can be given as: *ut scilicet or adeo et ea, ex qua me suscipis, incorrupta sit virgo, non solum incorruptione corporis sed etiam omni modo incorruptione mentis et animae;* but also as: *eo fine, ut ovis perdita fiat virgo incorupta.* St. Ambrose, *Exposit.* in Ps. 118, sermo 22, no. 30 (text of psalm is verse 176); *PL, XV, 1521.* Cf. Le Bachelet, *op. cit.*, 882.

because of her total incorruption of mind and heart. In this case Mary is the direct subject. If it is explained thus: to the end, that the lost sheep may become an uncorrupted virgin, it presents Mary as the simply inviolate standard of inviolability.

b. This immaculateness is ascribed to Mary as an attribute which she alone, of the human race, possesses in common with Christ. St. Ephraem says: "Thou, Lord, and thy mother, you alone are perfectly holy; for in thee, Lord, there is no stain, nor is there any blemish in thy mother."<sup>13</sup> In a singular manner her immaculateness is represented as similar to that of Christ. St. Bernard writes: "In order to become man, the Creator of the human race had to be born of a human being, and He had to select for Himself such a human being, indeed had to form such a mother, as He knew to be fitting and pleasing to Himself. Whence He willed her to be a virgin, in order that He who is immaculate Himself, could proceed from such an immaculate woman."<sup>14</sup> In that way He willed that the immaculateness of the Lamb of God should be extended to Mary as the immaculate *agna* or innocent dove.<sup>15</sup>

c. Mary's stainlessness is compared to the incorruptibility of the Godhead, also to that of the Holy Ghost, with whom Mary cooperated in the production of the immaculate Christ. St. Hippolytus writes: "Furthermore, the chest made of unperishable wood was the very Savior. For, by this chest is indicated the tabernacle, free from decay and corruption, which did not bring forth any corruption of sin. . . . According to His human nature, that

<sup>13</sup> St. Ephraem Syrus, *Carmina Nisibena*, edited by Bickell (Leipzig, 1866), p. 122.

<sup>14</sup> St. Bernard, *Hom. 2 super Missus est; PL, CLXXXIII*, 61.

<sup>15</sup> See Passaglia, *op. cit.*, nos. 384 ff.

is, from the Virgin and the Holy Ghost, the Lord, free from sin, was made of wood free from putrefaction, and lined inside and out, so to speak, with the purest gold of the Word of God.”<sup>16</sup>

d. From time immemorial, Mary’s spotlessness has had as its figure and symbol the immaculate earth from which Adam was formed. In the first place, this was applied to her corporeal virginity, but the freedom from God’s curse of the newly created earth is of course also considered. So at least, far back in the ancient account of the martyrdom of St. Andrew, in the discourse of Theodosius of Ancyra at the Council of Ephesus,<sup>17</sup> and in the Synodica of the Council of Frankfurt, we read: “Christ is born of the Virgin, indeed of a better earth which is animated as well as immaculate.”<sup>18</sup> In so far as Mary’s stainlessness is at the same time the immaculateness of the holy dwelling of Christ and God, it is presented by the immaculateness of paradise<sup>19</sup> and of heaven, and it finds its analogy in the immaculateness of the living heavens, the holy angels.<sup>20</sup>

e. Finally, in ecclesiastical parlance Mary’s immaculateness is on a level with the virginal immaculateness of the Church. By this is understood not the immaculateness of the members of the Church, which is sought through purification (Ephes. 5:27), but the original and unimpeachable purity of the Church herself as principle

<sup>16</sup> St. Hippolytus, *Or. in illud Ps. 22, Dominus pascit me*, PG, X, 609 (edited by Bonwetsch, I, 146 f.), kept by Theodoret, *Erasnites, Dial. 1*; PG, LXXXIII, 85–88.

<sup>17</sup> Theodosius of Ancyra, *Hom. I*, 1; PG, LVII, 1349; cf. *Hom. 6, no. 6*; PG, LXXVII, 1416 (Migne gives only the Latin text).

<sup>18</sup> PL, CI, 1340.

<sup>19</sup> See Passaglia, *op. cit.*, nos. 553 ff.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, nos. 1317 ff.

and instrument of sanctification. St. Augustine says: "Among the sons of men, the son of Mary, the bridegroom of the Church, which He made similar to His Mother, is comely in form. For He made her our mother, while keeping her as virgin for Himself. . . . Wherefore in the Church as in Mary there is perpetual integrity and uncorrupted fecundity."<sup>21</sup>

Therefore, it is but a true reflection of ancient tradition, when the brief, *Cogitis me*, explains in this way the words of the Canticle of Canticles, "Come, my dove, my spotless one," referring to Mary in this way: "Displaying a dovelike simplicity in all things, she was made beautiful by her many meritorious virtues and made more beautiful than whitened snow by the gifts of the Holy Ghost; because, whatever was wrought in her, was all purity and simplicity, all truth and grace, all mercy and justice, and hence she is immaculate, because she is not corrupted in anything."<sup>22</sup> Consequently, if from the simple title of Mary's immaculateness the immaculateness of her conception also cannot be deduced, as is sometimes done, it is equally wrong to maintain with Petavius, that from this title no argument whatever can be drawn.

Mary's universal and permanent immunity from all sin, especially her exceptional position among sinful humanity, is fundamentally formulated in the well-known words of St. Augustine: "Wherefore, with the exception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, regarding whom, because of the honor of God, I do not wish to ask a single question concerning sin,—for whence do we know that more grace to conquer sin from every side was bestowed upon

<sup>21</sup> St. Augustine, *Sermo* 195, no. 2; *PL*, XXXVIII, 1018.

<sup>22</sup> Pseudo-Jerome, *Epist. Cogitis me*; *PL*, XXX, 131.

her who merited to conceive and bear Him of whom it is certain that He was without all sin?—therefore, with the exception of this Virgin, if we could congregate all those holy men and women, at the time they lived here below, and interrogate them whether they were without sin, what do we think would be their answer? . . . Would they not exclaim with one voice: If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and truth is not in us.”<sup>23</sup> This is an answer to the remark of Pelagius, that, according to the Sacred Scriptures, many of the just of the Old Testament lived without sin, particularly, however, ‘the mother of our Lord and Savior, for piety demands that she be acknowledged to be without sin.’<sup>24</sup> The real point at issue here is, no doubt, the freedom from personal sins; but the pronouncement of the saint must not necessarily be limited to this. For, on the one hand, in the controversy with Pelagius, the question of original sin remained always in the background. On the other hand, the reason as well as the manner of Mary’s exemption from sin is expressed so emphatically and so generally, that it embraces every kind of sin. Therefore this special question is solved by a general principle. Moreover, St. Augustine shortly after explains that, essentially, it matters little whether others, besides Mary, really kept themselves free from all sin, so long as in them, as in Mary, the reason for this is ascribed to grace.<sup>25</sup> If this remark referred only to personal sins, Mary’s unique and

<sup>23</sup> St. Augustine, *De nat. et grat.*, c. 36, no. 42; *PL*, XLIV, 267. See Le Bachelet, *op. cit.*, sec. 883; B. Capelle, “La Pensée de S. Augustin sur l’imm. conception,” in *Rech. de théol. anc. et méd.*, IV (1931), 361–70.

<sup>24</sup> Pelagius, *Liber de natura* (fragments have been collected by J. Garnier); *PL*, XLVIII, 603; cited by St. Augustine, *op. cit.*; *PL*, XLIV, 267.

<sup>25</sup> St. Augustine, *op. cit.*; *PL*, XLIV, 271.

exceptional position, previously defended by St. Augustine, would obviously be eliminated.

2. The second traditional thought is the character of Mary as the heavenly Eve. She, the bride of the divine Adam and the heavenly mother of mankind, forms with Christ the beginning, foundations, and root of a new and higher creation of God, whereby the first was to be renewed and completed. Hence, in an analogous relation of resemblance and contradistinction, she stands to Eve as Christ to Adam.<sup>26</sup> Obviously this thought necessarily implies that Mary, although daughter of fallen Eve, could neither resemble her nor in any way be dependent on her. The divine action which granted her personal existence, placed her in opposition to the fallen Eve, and consequently she must be created in that state of holiness and innocence in which the first Eve was created. Otherwise the parallel would be incomplete and unnatural, and the heavenly Eve would seem less richly endowed than the first.

Among others St. Ephraem writes: "Each is made equally pure and guileless, but Eve became the cause of death; Mary, the cause of our salvation."<sup>27</sup> He is even more detailed in the somewhat daring figure of the two eyes: "It is clear that Mary was the gate to Christ's heaven, by whose presence our hope revived, when by her the light revisited the world and its inhabitants, which light Eve, as origin of all evil, had banished. And if you wish to become acquainted with the mystery of each, consider the two eyes of a body, one of which lost its light by being

<sup>26</sup> See *infra*, chap. 9

<sup>27</sup> St. Ephraem of Syria, *Sermones exegeticci*, in Gen. 3:6; edited by Assemani (Syr.-lat) (Rome, 1740), II, 327; cited by Le Bachelet, *op. cit.*, sec. 880.

accidentally blinded, making the other shine with a brighter light and causing the eye to take in everything. Now, take a look back at the world. It received two eyes: Eve, the left eye, became plainly blinded; Mary, the right eye, became by that calamity most bright.”<sup>28</sup> Theodosius of Ancyra writes: “In place of the virgin Eve, who became to us an instrument of death, God chose a virgin to give life. This virgin was most pleasing to Him and full of grace. In life this woman was averse to the iniquity of the first woman. She is a virgin, innocent and immaculate, holy in mind and body, produced as a lily among thorns, who knew not the evil of Eve . . . who was a daughter of Adam, but unlike him.”<sup>29</sup>

3. At a very early date, on the strength of these fundamental observations, the special, closely associated idea of Mary’s purity in her origin, or the immediate union of grace with the creation of her soul revealed itself. Thus in the Latin Church of the fourth and fifth centuries, Peter Chrysologus speaks of Mary in her origin as “wedded to God.”<sup>30</sup> St. Maximus of Turin calls her a “worthy dwelling of God by virtue of original grace.” He writes:<sup>31</sup> “Mary was indeed a dwelling fit for Christ, not because of the state of her body, but by virtue of original grace.” St. Ambrose pictures Mary as a “being of heavenly origin.” He says:<sup>32</sup> “Whence this work? Certainly not from this world, but from heaven Christ selected this ves-

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 329.

<sup>29</sup> Theodosius of Ancyra, *Hom.* 6; *PG*, LXXVII, 1427; Jugie, *art. “Imm. Conc.”* in *Dict. de théol. cath.*, VII, 906 f., gives the Greek text according to codex 1171 of the Bibliothèque nationale at Paris.

<sup>30</sup> St. Peter Chrysologus, *Sermo* 140; *PL*, LII, 576.

<sup>31</sup> St. Maximus of Turin, *Hom. 6 ante natale Domini*; *PL*, LVII, 235; cf. Le Bachelet, *op. cit.*, 982.

<sup>32</sup> St. Ambrose, *De instit. virg. ad Euseb.*, c. 5; *PL*, XVI, 313.

sel, by which He was to descend; He set this temple of chastity apart as sacred."

The authors of hymns most strikingly expressed the contrast between Mary's pure origin and the tainted origin of the rest of mankind. In this way Sedulius gives us the figure of the rose which blooms amid thorns. God effected:

"That, whence  
Guilt brought death, thence piety might bring salvation,  
And, as the tender rose blooms amid sharp thorns,  
Having nothing harmful, conceals its mother with its  
honor,  
So likewise holy Mary, coming from the stem of Eve,  
As the new virgin, might expiate the misdeed of the  
ancient virgin."<sup>33</sup>

The figure of the rose blooming among thorns, is a striking transposition of the biblical figure of the lily among thorns. An other and different reading is the figure of the chestnut which grows in thorns, that is, in a thorny shell. It is presented by Eadmerus.<sup>34</sup> Akin to this is that biblical figure, used by Paul the Deacon and Peter Damian, of the twig which springs up straight out of a crooked and gnarled root.<sup>35</sup> Equally striking is the oft-

<sup>33</sup> Sedulius, *Carmen pasch.*; *PL*, XIX, 295 f.  
God has effected:

*Ut, unde*  
*Culpa dedit mortem, pietas daret inde salutem,*  
*Et, velut e spinis mollis rosa surgit acutis,*  
*Nil quod laedat habens, matremque obscurat honore,*  
*Sic, Eva de stirpe sacra veniente Maria,*  
*Virginis antiquae facinus nova virgo piaret.*

<sup>34</sup> Eadmerus, *Tract. de conc. s. Mariae*; *PL*, CLIX, 305.

<sup>35</sup> Paulus Diac., *Hom. I de Ass.*; *PL*, XCIV, 1567; (St. Peter Damian), *serm. 11*; *PL*, CXLIV, 558 (by Nicolas of Clairvaux).

explained figure of the cloud, formed from brackish sea-water, but free from all bitterness.

There follows an ancient hymn, written in Ambrosian style:

“As soon as the first earth-born parent perished  
 from swallowing the poison of the malicious serpent,  
 An infectious poison, flowing therefrom and infiltrating  
 the race,  
 inflicted upon the whole of it a deep wound.  
 But the Saviour having compassion on creatures, and  
 discerning the untouched womb of the propitiatory  
 Virgin,  
 Committed to her the bringing of the joy of salvation to  
 the world  
 languishing in its deadly crime.”<sup>36</sup>

The doctrine was so popular at the time, that the Pelagian Julianus thought to deal a decisive blow to the dogma of the universality of original sin, by reproaching St. Augustine, that he acted more irreverently towards Mary than Jovinianus had done. For he said: “Jovinianus destroyed the virginity of Mary by the manner of her giving birth; but you surrender Mary herself to the devil by the manner of her birth.” St. Augustine answered “We do not surrender Mary to the devil by the manner of her

<sup>36</sup> Quoted by Ballerini, *Sylloge . . .*, I, 34.

Hymn: *Hausto maligni primus ut occidit*

*Virus (indecl. for viro) chelydri terrigenum parens,*  
*Hinc lapsa pestis per genus irrepens*  
*Cunctum profundo vulnere perculit.*  
*Rerum misertus sed Sator, inscia*  
*Cernens piacli viscera Virginis,*  
*His ferre mortis crimine languido*  
*Mandat salutis gaudia saeculo.*

birth, but because the condition of her birth is explained by the grace of her rebirth.”<sup>37</sup> Which means: although in Mary also this condition of birth is present, so that she would have been subject to the dominion of the devil, yet this condition was lifted, i.e., made ineffective, by the timely intervention of the grace of the rebirth. If St. Augustine had wished to say simply, that because of her later rebirth, he did not consign Mary to the devil forever, his answer would miss the mark and would have to be understood quite differently.

Still more light is shed on this text by a sermon of St. Augustine, found by Cardinal Mai, relating to the miracle at the marriage feast of Cana. After saying that, in consequence of the devil’s seduction of our first parents, the human race was, as it were, wedded to Satan, he goes on: “Whilst thus tossed about, lying on the same reclining couch, the devil and the soul shamelessly frolic, when Jesus was invited . . . (there is a hiatus here in the codex) until they ran out of the wine of luxury. Christ’s Mother, however, abhorring that pact of criminal concubinage, and remaining a virgin not only in body but also in spirit, participated as an invited guest in the condition of the race, not by sharing in the crime, but as being a part of the whole the race which had to be born, not by association in the sin, but as one who . . . is in harmony with Christ, and not with the unclean world.”<sup>38</sup>

Among the testimonies of later date we find the *Breviarium in Psalmos* explaining the words of Ps. 77, 14, “And

<sup>37</sup> St. Augustine, *Opus imperf. contra Julianum*, IV, 122; *PL*, XLV, 1418; the text of Julian is quoted by St. Augustine, *ibid.*, 1417.

<sup>38</sup> Serm. 118, by Angel. Mai, *Nova Patrum Bibliotheca* (Rome, 1852), I, 248. G. Morin, *S. Augusti sermones . . .*, Rome, 1930, p. 283, places it among the *Sermones Augustino certo suppositos*.

He conducted them with a cloud by day:" Behold the Lord came to Egypt at that time on an airy cloud and conducted them with a cloud by day. It is rightly said, "by day"; for the cloud was not there in the darkness but always in daylight.<sup>39</sup> Paul the Deacon writes: "How fitting, dear brethren, to call this blessed Virgin and Mother a sprout, the Virgin who projected the intention of her perfect work into the supernal and who being flexible and totally free from the knots of corruption, was remarkable through her humility." These same thoughts are found later in Peter Damian: "Thus the sprout of Jesse buds from the distorted root of the human race, and shooting up from the tree of the patriarchs in height and erectness, knows no inclination of becoming knotty nor the darkness of the children of Adam."<sup>40</sup>

In the Eastern Churches the doctrine finds much richer and more sublime documentary evidence. It is true that most of the more ancient documents are critically open to challenge; nevertheless, they are very ancient and, therefore, not without value. Such is the account of the martyrdom of St. Andrew, dating at least from the second century; here occurs for the first time the "immaculate earth."<sup>41</sup> Dionysius of Alexandria writes: "The one and only virginal daughter of life brought forth the Word—the virginal paradise—a living dwelling not fabricated or manufactured by men, but made firm by the Holy

<sup>39</sup> *Inter opera S. Hieron.*, *PL*, XXVI, 1049.

<sup>40</sup> Paulus Diac., *Hom. I de Ass.*, *PL*, XCV, 1567 (the only text taken by Scheeben from the Patrology of Migne); Peter Damian (?), *Sermo 11*; *PL*, CXLIV, 558. Peter Damian writes: *Germinat igitur virga Jesse de tortuosa radice generis humani, et de patriarcharum arbore in altitudinem et rectitudinem erumpens, omnem ignorant nodostitatem, filiorum Adae tenebras nescit.* The text does not have *Adae*, and the publisher suggests *foliorum* instead of *filiorum*; then follows: (*in*) *fructuosa quaeque non habet.*

<sup>41</sup> *PG*, II, 1225: *ἐχ τοῦ ἀμωμήτου γῆς.*

Spirit and protected by the power of the Most High.”<sup>42</sup> Origen writes: “A virgin who is not deceived by the persuasion of the serpent nor infected by his poisonous breath.” And Athanasius says: “A virgin protected by the power of the Most High, not at any one time, but always.”<sup>43</sup> Proclus writes: “Though she is formed out of the slime of the earth, she is the orb of a new celestial creature upon which the sun of justice uninterruptedly sends its rays, thereby causing all darkness of sin to flee from her whole soul.”<sup>44</sup> From the Syrians of the fourth century come the certainly genuine testimonies of St. Ephraem,<sup>45</sup> Cyrillonas, and Robulas, later James of Sarug or Batna.<sup>46</sup> Of the Greeks in the fifth century we have Theodotus of Ancyra,<sup>47</sup> referred to above. The universal diffusion of the doctrine appears most evident from the fact that all the Eastern Churches, even those which separated in the earliest times, possess the doctrine itself as well as the feast.<sup>48</sup> It also speaks well for its popularity, that even Mohammed sums it up, not indistinctly, in the Koran.<sup>49</sup>

The feast is found for the first time in the *Typikon*, the ritual of St. Sabbas. This had originally been drawn up in

<sup>42</sup> Dionysius of Alexandria, *Advers. Paulum Samosatenum*; Mansi, *Concilia*, I, 1043, 1063, 1087. Scheeben quotes from Perrone, *De immaculato B.M.V. conceptu*, Part I, c. 10 (Rome, 1847), pp. 53 f.

<sup>43</sup> Origen is quoted by Perrone, *op. cit.*, p. 57, with the following reference: *Opera*, II, Paris 1572, *Hom. 1 inter Hom. in diversos*, 274–75 (incorrectly quoted, according to Huet, in edition of Migne, *PG*, XVII, 1277–80); Pseudo-Athanasius, *Or. in annunt. Deip.*; *PG*, XXVIII, 929.

<sup>44</sup> Proclus, *Or. 6*; *PG*, LXV, 733 (in the text: ἡ ἐχ τοῦ ἀγαῖοῦ πεπλησμένη πηλοῦ; in *nota variante*: καξαροῦ) and 757. The text in question from *Or. 1* is quoted as proof by Perrone, *op. cit.*, pp. 61 f.

<sup>45</sup> For St. Ephraem, see *supra*, notes 13 and 27.

<sup>46</sup> See Malou, *op. cit.*, II; cf. Jugie, *Dict. de théol. cath.*, VII, 976 f.

<sup>47</sup> See *supra*, note 29.

<sup>48</sup> See Malou, *op. cit.*, chaps. 4 and 10; cf. Jugie, *op. cit.*, pp. 975–79.

<sup>49</sup> See Passaglia, *op. cit.*, no. 1817 f.; cf. Jugie, *op. cit.*, pp. 978 f.

485, but later underwent many alterations and additions. Hence, it cannot be proved with certainty that the feast appeared in the first issue.<sup>50</sup> The first fixed date is given in the festal hymns of St. Andrew of Crete, about 675.<sup>51</sup> The festal sermons which we possess begin in the eighth century with John of Euboea, about 740, and in the ninth with Peter of Argos and George of Nicomedia.<sup>52</sup>

The title of the feast differs.<sup>53</sup> Now it reads "Conception of St. Ann," now "Announcement of the conception of the holy Mother of God." Because of the Eastern legends concerning Mary's youth, according to which an angel announced to the parents of Mary, till then childless, the birth of a daughter endowed with grace, the object of the feast was considered analogous to that of the annunciation of Christ's conception and that of John the Baptist, which were celebrated on the authority of the Sacred Scriptures. For, as early as the fifth century, the "Conception of St. Elizabeth" was also celebrated in the East, and also in certain parts of the West, e.g., in Ravenna, where Peter Chrysologus glorified it in several sermons.<sup>54</sup> Without doubt, the very existence of this feast emphasized the need of analogous feasts of the Blessed Virgin.

The miracle, experienced by Mary's childless parents, was also brought into connection with the feast of her conception, whereas in the conception of St. John the

<sup>50</sup> Cf. Jugie, *op. cit.*, p. 957.

<sup>51</sup> PG, XCIVII, 1805-29; see Jugie, *op. cit.*, pp. 916 f.

<sup>52</sup> John of Euboea, *S. in conc. S. Deiparae*, PG, XCVI, 1460-1500; Peter of Argos, *Or. in conc. s. Annae*, PG, 104, 1352-65; George of Nicomed., *Or quatuor in oraculum conceptionis, Deiparae*, etc., PG, C, 1336-1401. See also Ballerini, *Sylloge*, I, 36-155.

<sup>53</sup> Concerning the feast of the Conception in the East, see Jugie, *op. cit.*, 956-62. The title of the feast was *Conceptio S. Annae* or *oraculum, annuntiatio-, conceptionis, S. Deiparae*.

<sup>54</sup> See previous chapter, note 11.

Baptist there could be no question of original sanctification, nor was any raised. From this fact some wished to infer that the feast did not at all refer to Mary's original sanctification, but should figure only as a commemorative feast of the physical wonder in question, seeing that God thereby granted existence to a person who, in the future, would in a very special way be sanctified by Him and made the instrument of salvation for mankind.

What was overlooked, however, was that the idea of the feast was not thought of exclusively in relation to the conception of the Baptist, but also, and more directly, on the analogy of Christ's conception. In Christ, the influence of the Holy Ghost in the forming of His body and in the hypostatic union forms one whole, and the virginal conception of His body answers to His quality of "holy fruit" and "Son of God." In Mary, the physical miracle was conceived in the closest connection with the spiritual sanctification and as one single act. The miraculous intervention of God in Mary's bodily production was held to be fitting and significant for the very reason that in it the main point was the production of the "offshoot" and "the fruit of grace."

In the homily of St. John Damascene on Mary's birth, *genesion*, can as well be used in connection with the "birth in the womb," which indeed forms the real purport of the sermon. He says: "Why is the virgin mother born of a sterile mother? Plainly because it was necessary that the way to that, which was to be a new thing under the sun and the principal among wonders, should be paved by wonders, and a gradual ascent should be made from the lower to the more sublime. For the rest, I can also advance another higher and more divine reason. For nature yields

to grace and stands irresolute, ceasing to act. Since, therefore, the mother of God was to be born a virgin of Anna, nature did not dare to impede the bud of grace, but remained devoid of its fruit, while grace was bringing forth its fruit." In the following paragraph St. John Damascene compares the miraculous influence on the parents with the sharpening of the axe, which God wished to use for the building of the heavenly ladder. He says: "Today this Son of a carpenter, this Word, the artificer of all things, made Himself an animated ladder, sharpening the dull axe of nature through the Holy Ghost as with His finger."<sup>55</sup> Hence the relation of the feast to the miracle, which ended the sterility of the parents, can so slightly dim the connection with Mary's original sanctification, that in reality this dogmatic thought formed the real kernel in the idea of the feast, and for that very reason the facts from legendary tradition appeared intrinsically justified.

The dogmatic thought is accordingly presented in various ways in the offices of the feast and in the sermons relating to it, among which should be reckoned many connected with Mary's birth. Besides the ancient sermons already mentioned, the following also may be noted: from the ninth and tenth centuries that of St. Theodore of Studium, author of the *oratio 2 de nativitate*, found in Damascene,<sup>56</sup> those of Photius, Nicetas Paphlago, Joannes Geometres, Leo the Wise, emperor, and others.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>55</sup> St. John Damascene, *Hom. 1 in nativitate B.V.M.*, nos. 2 and 3; *PG*, XCVI, 664.

<sup>56</sup> *PG*, XCVI, 680–97; cf. Jugie, *op. cit.*, 922.

<sup>57</sup> Respectively in the following texts of *PG* and of Jugie, *op. cit.*, 102, 548–61 (sec. 924–26); 105, 16–28 (sec. 928 f.); 106, 812–48 (sec. 931 f.); 107, 1–12 (sec. 929 f.).

St. Andrew of Crete makes mention of the restoration of the original and pure creation within the spoiled creation, and writes: "Today a temple is constructed, made by the Creator of all things. Today Adam (in Christ) wishes to offer the first-fruits to the Lord for us and from us, and selects as first-fruits Mary who out of the whole fermentation was never fermented, and by whom the bread was made whereby the human race was to be regenerated. Today human nature, which was once formed good and pure, receives the gift of its first divine creation and restores it to its former self."<sup>58</sup>

St. John Damascene refers to the safeguarding of Mary against the influence of the devil, and says: "O most sacred daughter of Joachim and Anna, who wast hidden from principalities and powers as well as from the fiery darts of the devil, who layest in the bridal bed of the Holy Ghost and wast kept without stain, in order to become the bride of God and God's mother by nature." And again, elsewhere: "Today Eden received the rational paradise of the new Adam in which the condemnation was lifted, and in which the tree of life was planted. No access to this paradise was open to the serpent. For the only begotten Son of God formed Himself into a man from this virgin and this pure earth."<sup>59</sup> The expression of frequent occurrence, that "by nature"<sup>60</sup> Mary is holy and pure, and is more beautiful than the angels, can have several meanings. It includes, however, at all times the idea of

<sup>58</sup> St. Andrew of Crete, *Or. in nativ. Deip.*, PG, XCVII, 809, 812; cf. Jugie, *op. cit.*, sec. 916-19.

<sup>59</sup> St. John Damascene, *Or. I in nativ. Deip.*, no. 7; PG, XCVI, 672; *Or. 2 in dormit.*, no. 2; PG, XCVI, 725; cf. Jugie, *op. cit.*, sec. 920 f.

<sup>60</sup> Ψύσει = *natura*. Cf. Eph. 2:3: *natura filii irae*.

the closest connection of grace with the origin of Mary's person.<sup>61</sup>

The close union of grace with nature is so clearly understood by the doctors of that time that they do not consider Mary's conception in Anna's womb, or the origin of her personal being *in concreto* as a work of nature accompanied by the influence of grace. They look upon it simply as a supernatural work of God, in which the influence of nature is indeed not excluded, but placed entirely under the influence of grace. It is a new and heavenly creation on the basis of the existing earthly creation. For, the Spirit of God shares in this work, as in the origin of the other children of Adam, not only by creating and infusing the soul, but His work is also similar to, but not identical with His action in Christ's conception. As once in the creation of the first man, so now as "the finger of God" He influences the formation of the body and, as the Holy Spirit, breathes into it a holy soul, or takes up His personal abode in it. John of Euboea says: "Mary is conceived in the womb by the will of God the Father and the cooperation of the most holy and vivifying Spirit."<sup>62</sup>

The clearest and most common expressions for this are the following: 1. in her origin Mary is created or formed by God as a "tabernacle not made with hands," that is, "not of this creation." (A similar expression with regard to Christ's humanity is found also in Heb. 8:2.)  
 2. As a "living heaven," she is built up by God Himself as

<sup>61</sup> St. Ephraem of Syria, *Opera graece—lat.* (ed. by Assemani), III, 328; quoted by Le Bachelet, *op. cit.*, p. 880; George Nicomed., *Hom. 2 in praesent.*; PG, C, 1425; cf. Jugie, *op. cit.*, sec. 926; Epiphanius, *de vita B. Virginis*, 6; PG, CXX, 197; cf. Jugie, *op. cit.*, sec. 923.

<sup>62</sup> John of Euboea, *Hom. in conc. Dcip.*, n. 23; PG, XCVI, 1500; cf. Jugie, *op. cit.*, sec. 921 f.

a pure and holy temple, and planted by Him in a fertile field as an unfading and fragrant rose or lily. 3. As a "spiritual paradise" or the "veritable tree of life."<sup>63</sup> These are the same expressions as are used preferably for Christ's own conception.

Continuing the analogy, they contemplated from so many angles the working of God's supernatural influence on Mary's production with regard to the holiness of the fruit, that they extended it to Mary's parents. In reference to them also, a filling with and a purification by the Holy Ghost is spoken of, whereby they too were safeguarded against sensuality in this production, and their flesh too was purified.<sup>64</sup> Consequently Mary appeared pure in her origin not only by the influence of the divine principle, but also by that of the human. She appeared pure, therefore, down to the foundations of her being, and even down to the matter from which she was formed; in other words, down to the root, yes to the very seed, from which she sprang.

This precise designation of Mary's purity is, however, only a theological conclusion from the dogmatic concept of the permanent purity of her person, as the intervention of the miracle, in the production of her body, is an addition which at the same time rests on legendary tradition. Even though this corollary should ever remain a moot question, still its existence, so far as the principle from which it is deduced is concerned, proves all the more clearly the strength of the conviction.

This whole concept resting on the analogy of Mary's

<sup>63</sup> Cf. Peter of Argos, *Or. in conc. s. Annae*, no. 1; PG, CIV, 1352 f.; cf. Jugie, *op. cit.*, sec. 931.

<sup>64</sup> See St. John Damascene, *Or. in de nativ. Deip.*, no. 2; PG, XCVI, 664.

conception with that of Christ, was attested by the liturgical name “the child of God.”<sup>65</sup> This name combines the names, “daughter and fruit of grace, life, and light,” and expresses the very thought which is voiced in Western liturgies by the application of the books of Wisdom to Mary.

<sup>65</sup> Ἡ θεόπαις, the child of God.

## CHAPTER V

# Origin and Significance of the Controversy about Mary's Immaculate Conception

1. Although the early Western tradition fundamentally contains the principles of this thesis as decisively as does the Eastern, the attention of the West during those many centuries was not especially directed to this doctrine in itself. At the same time, however, the dogma of the universality of original sin was accentuated all the more emphatically, and hence the doctrine of Mary's Immaculate Conception was relegated entirely to the background.

Therefore, whereas the East considered Mary's conception almost exclusively on the analogy of that of Christ, Western theology was intent upon emphasizing the contrast between it and the conception of Christ, and its resemblance to that of the rest of mankind. However, if the West in the twelfth century had been aware of the rich Eastern tradition, the controversy arising out of the introduction of the "feast of Mary's conception" would have been almost impossible, or at least it would have taken another course. For from the beginning St. Bernard refers to the fact, that the feast is foreign to the rite of the Church and to the ancient tradition. Because of the teaching in reference to the universality of original sin and the need of redemption, an opposition arose against the feast,

in so far as it concerned the holiness and immaculateness of the conception. Almost all the masters of theology took part in it in the twelfth and especially in the thirteenth century.

As a rule the opponents really denied the Immaculate Conception even in the sense of the present dogma. Still, the attack of the opposition was not turned directly and fundamentally against this meaning, that is, against the purity of the personal conception, nor against the preservation of the soul or of the animated offspring from the stain of original sin. It was rather directed against the purity of the carnal conception, or against the sanctification of the flesh, which preceded its vivifying by the spiritual soul. In general, they opposed such a preventing and safeguarding sanctification of Mary, as left in her person no contraction of sin under whatever form or aspect. Therefore, they opposed a safeguarding which completely excluded all necessity of being subject to the stain, because it took effect, in time or at least by nature, before the person of Mary was constituted by the union of soul and body, and existed in her quality as daughter of Adam. The safeguarding of Mary against the inherited stain of sin was denied only because for no sufficiently serious reason it was deemed impossible to reconcile such safeguarding with the need of redemption. For the most part this came about by the fact that, before Scotus, the defenders of the safeguarding, instead of elucidating the point, clouded the issue by the manner in which it was presented.

Scotus cleared the issue and proved that this safeguarding was the most complete form of redemption. From that time, because of the traditional conception of

the absolute and perfect purity in the Mother of God, a change of opinion soon followed among most theologians. Relatively few clung tenaciously to the shell of the doctrine regarding the universality of sin, and they ascribed to the opinion of the theologians from the thirteenth century, especially of St. Thomas, a sense and significance which it by no means possessed. The opposition continued for centuries.

Before the eleventh century the feast of Mary's conception existed nowhere in the Latin Church outside of Naples and Sicily, where it had been introduced through relations with the East.<sup>1</sup>

Sometimes much importance is attached to the fact that the feast existed in Cremona as early as the eleventh century, and appeal is made in this connection to the foundation in 1047 of a certain Hugo de Summo in behalf of the feast. But apart from the fact that the learned liturgist Sicardus, who less than 200 years later was bishop of Cremona, traces the origin of the feast to the time of St. Anselm, the document contained a formula of the dogma, so correctly put ("Mary was preserved from the stain of original sin by an anticipated redemption") as to be equalled by no theologian before Scotus.<sup>2</sup> What is said about the introduction of the feast into Spain by St. Ildefonse, is based partly on a misunderstanding of the genuine documents, partly on false informations.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It is witnessed by a marble Kalendarium found in Naples, which dates from the middle of the ninth century. See a picture of it in Cabrol et Le Clercq, *Dict. d'archéol. chrét. et de liturg.* II, 1591; cf. Le Bachelet, *op. cit.*, 987, where mention is made of the origin of the feast in the West (980-95).

<sup>2</sup> Text of this document of Hugo of Summo is found in Ballerini's *Sylloge*, I, 1-25; see also Le Bachelet, *op. cit.*, 987.

<sup>3</sup> See Le Bachelet, *op. cit.*, 986. Since Scheeben's time the attention has been focussed on the indicia of the feast in Ireland in the beginning of the tenth century. Cf. H. Thurston, "The Irish Origins of our Lady's Conception

On the other hand, the Latins, like the Greeks, so understood the holiness of the "birth of the Blessed Virgin," that thereby they included also the "birth in the womb." It appears thus in Paschasius Radbertus in a remarkable but difficult part of the second book *de partu Virginis*;<sup>4</sup> in Peter Damian, where he describes Mary in her birth as "the aurora which ascends in the night of sin: the aurora from which arises the sun of justice."<sup>5</sup> For the first time we find here the application of the text from Job 3:9: "Let the night (in which Job was born) expect light and not see it, nor the rising of the dawning of the day." In the thirteenth century this text was used also by those theologians who limited the holiness of Mary's birth to the birth from the womb, although Peter Damian held that it speaks against rather than for such a limitation.<sup>6</sup> In the beginning of the eleventh century, Fulbert of Chartres definitely harks back to the conception and, in conjunction with the Latin version of the eastern legend by the Pseudo-Jerome, he treats this in all particulars as do the orientals.<sup>7</sup>

Feast," *The Month*, CIII (1904), 449-65. In England in the pre-Norman period, cf. Edm. Bishop, "On the Origins of the Feast of the Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, *Downside Review* (1886), reprinted in Bishop, *Liturgica Historica* (Oxford, 1918), pp. 238-49. See Le Bachelet, *op. cit.*, 987-92.

<sup>4</sup> Pasch. Radb., *De partu Virginis*, *PL*, CXX, 1371; see Passaglia, *op. cit.*, no. 1640; cf. Le Bachelet, *op. cit.*, 984 f.

<sup>5</sup> St. Peter Damian or rather Nicholas of Clairvaux, *Sermo 40 de assumpt.*; *PL*, CXLIV, 719 f.; about St. Peter Damian, see Le Bachelet, *op. cit.*, 995.

<sup>6</sup> See Passaglia, *op. cit.*, 1632.

<sup>7</sup> Fulbert. Carnot., *Serm. 6 in ortu almae Virg.*, *PL*, CXLI, 326 f.; see Le Bachelet, *op. cit.*, 985 f. Here Scheeben goes into details concerning the origin of the feast in England. Since recent researches have elucidated this point rather well, we shall leave out this passage of Scheeben and give instead the present status of the question. The conquest of England by William I of Normandy (1066) resulted in the disappearance of all traces of the celebration of this feast from the pre-Norman period (Bishop, *op. cit.*, p. 246; Le Bachelet, *op. cit.*, 1003). The feast was re-established by young Anselm

In the genuine writings of St. Anselm no trace is found of his leaning in favor of the feast or the doctrine. On the contrary, in his *Cur Deus homo* (1098), he passes over in silence Boso's remark: "The Virgin herself was conceived in iniquity and born with the original sin."<sup>8</sup> This, however, is not conclusive, for the very reason that Anselm himself declared the book unfinished. But in the book he wrote at Lyons, *De conceptu virginali Christi et originali peccato* (1099), in which the famous passage appears relative to the perfect purity of the Mother of God,<sup>9</sup> judging by the context and the reference to the earlier passage, he does not seem to consider this purity greater than the purity already attained by Mary through her faith in Christ before His conception.<sup>10</sup>

In general, the introduction of this feast and the enthusiasm for its purport seem to have been lacking in theological guidance. Childlike piety, incited by accounts of miracles and revelations, had the upperhand. In favor of the doctrine and the feast these miracles were advanced together with the appreciation of its eminent appropriateness, but positive theological reasons were not stressed.<sup>11</sup> Further, a clear exposition of the idea of the

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(cousin of the saint, who died in 1109) who returned as papal legate from Rome, where he was abbot of the Greek monastery of St. Sabbas, and who in 1120 became abbot of St. Edmund's (Le Bachelet, *op. cit.*, 1006). Under his influence the feast began soon to spread in England and Normandy. But opposition also followed quickly. It resulted in the written defense (the first which was preserved), Eadmerus' *Tractatus de conceptione s. Mariae*. The opposition was probably broken by a council of London in 1129 (Bishop, *op. cit.*, pp. 246 and 247 note 5). In 1136 the feast was introduced in Lyons (Le Bachelet, *op. cit.*, 1011), against which two years later (*ibid.*) St. Bernard protested.

<sup>8</sup> St. Anselm, *Cur Deus homo*, Vol. II, chap. 16; *PL*, CLVIII, 416.

<sup>9</sup> St. Anselm, *De conceptu virginali*, chap. 18; *PL*, CLVIII, 451.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Le Bachelet, *op. cit.*, 995–1001.

<sup>11</sup> Scheeben alludes mainly to a revelation which Helsinus (or Elsinus, also Aethelsige), Abbot of Ramsay, about 1070, is said to have had on the

feast was also lacking. For that reason it was quite proper for St. Bernard, in his famous letter about 1140, to urge the prebendaries of Lyons to a careful research.<sup>12</sup> He pointed out the danger of error and confusion which could and must ensue from a demand, none too clearly defined, for the celebration of Mary's conception as well as her birth, since the latter supposes the former. This demand meant either that the conception was sanctified in the same way as the birth from the womb, so that Mary was conceived already sanctified; or that the holiness of her birth was so conditioned by the sanctification of her conception, that the conception was the means by which Mary was sanctified and, therefore, also was born sanctified. But both were impossible: the former, because before her conception Mary had no existence whatever; the latter, because, in that case, the producing factors operating in the conception had to be the vehicle and instrument of the Holy Ghost, and the carnal appeal in the act of production did not allow this. Consequently, there was the danger either of introducing

occasion of a miraculous rescue from imminent shipwreck. This revelation said, that the day of Mary's conception must be celebrated with the *officium nativitatis* (provided that *nativitatis* is replaced with *conceptionis*). This narrative appears in many documents mostly ascribed to St. Anselm (*Sermo de conc. C. Mariae, PL, CLIX, 319 ff.; Miraculum de conceptione s. Mariae, ibid. 323 ff.*) and was enriched in the course of time with other miracles (see Le Bachelet, *op. cit.*, 1001 ff.). The first defenders of the feast (Eadmerus, see note 7, and Osbertus of Clara, in a letter to Anselm Junior, which Thurston has published together with the tract of Eadmerus, 1904) seem unaware of this narrative. But St. Bernard (*Epist. 174, no. 6; PL, CLXXXII, 335: profertur scriptum supernae, ut aiunt, revelationis*) appears to allude to it, and shortly after him it appears in many breviaries, martyrologies and other liturgical books. It has no doubt had a great influence on the propagation of the feast. But Scheeben's judgment, that the feast was lacking in theological guidance, seems too strict. It may be sufficient to point to the writings of Osbertus and particularly to those of Eadmerus. Cf. Le Bachelet, *op. cit.*, 1004.

<sup>12</sup> St. Bernard, *Epist. 174; PL, CLXXXII, 332-36.*

a false holiness, i.e., the holiness of a non-existent being, or, of paying honor to sin, i.e., to sexual appetite.

The sense of Bernard's letter seems to indicate that the conception in question is not the conception of the person and of the spirit by the creation of the soul, but the conception of the seed which, at that time, was simply called conception by all. The context shows this and without exception all theologians of the thirteenth century understood him in that way. Moreover, in the *Acta*, which St. Bernard had at his disposal, this conception with the creation of the soul was emphatically indicated as the object of the feast.<sup>13</sup> Hence, the syllogism also refers to this conception: "If, therefore, she could by no means be sanctified before her conception, because she was non-existent, but neither in the conception itself (in the act of conception) because of sin (that is, sensuality) which took part in it, there remains that she is believed to have been sanctified when she already existed in the womb after her conception, which sanctification, with the exclusion of sin, sanctified her birth, but not her conception."<sup>14</sup> Accordingly, Bernard's opposition was in no way directly concerned with the object of the feast according to the dogma. Even the sanctification after the conception, which he advances, can be understood as a sanctification

<sup>13</sup> Scheeben knew only a more recent wording of Pseudo-Anselm's *Sermo de conc.*, found also in Migne, *PL*, CLIX, 319–24. In the revelation of Helinus he read that the *dies conceptionis et creationis Matris Domini* (*PL*, CLIX, 320) had to be celebrated. In the more ancient text, published by Thurston in the edition of Eadmerus' *Tractatus* (1904), it reads only: *Dies conceptionis matris Christi* (*op. cit.*, p. 90). The words quoted by Scheeben in the previous chapter (note 14) from that *sermo* concerning the *conceptio spiritualis* or *creatio animae*, can be found in a volume which later added to the more ancient wording. St. Bernard probably knew only the more ancient form of that *sermo*; in his *Epist.* 174 no mention is made of *creatio animae* or *conceptio spiritualis*.

<sup>14</sup> *Op. cit.*, *PL*, CLXXXII, 335.

by the infusion of the soul, although, in comparing it with the holiness of John the Baptist, he certainly did not elucidate this point and seems hardly to have thought of it. Otherwise, he appears desirous only of counselling prudence, not of pronouncing a decisive judgment in the matter, rather in fact of leaving the decision to the Holy See.<sup>15</sup>

The appeal of St. Bernard did not directly result in checking the propagation of the feast.<sup>16</sup> Only later, at least in some dioceses, did the University of Paris cause the suppression of the feast, because and in so far as it referred to the holiness of the conception of the seed or of the flesh as an act, or at least to a sanctification of the flesh conceived in the conception of the seed, or also to a sanctification after the conception and before the animation.<sup>17</sup> In fact, this formulation indicated clearly what, in the opinion of the opponents was to be rejected as objectionable or at least as questionable, in the idea of the feast as then understood. They had in mind not only a sanctification of the soul, and of the body by the soul in and by the creation of the latter, but primarily a sancti-

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Le Bachelet, *op. cit.*, 1010–15.

<sup>16</sup> Scheeben added: "for fourteen years later it is found in the whole of France." Since he gives the date of St. Bernard's letter as 1140, it must allude to a statute of Atto, prior of a Benedictine monastery in the Gascogne: *Anno Inc. Dom. 1154 . . . statuimus de B. Dei Gen. M. conceptione, quod jam fere per totam Galliam devotissime ab omni christiano percelebratur populo, hoc et a fratribus nostris . . . solemnisetur*" (Martene, *De antiquis monachorum ritibus*, lib. IV, c. 2, n. 16; Lugduni, 1680, p. 573). For the propagation of the feast, see Le Bachelet, *op. cit.*, 1033 f., 1064 f.

<sup>17</sup> Scheeben refers only to St. Albert the Great, in *3 Sent.*, dist. 3, a. 4. There we read: *Dicimus quod B.V. non fuit sanctificata ante animationem, et qui dicunt oppositum est haeresis condemnata a Beato Bernardo in epistola ad Lugdunenses et a magistris omnibus Parisiensibus.* It seems indeed that under the pressure of the *doctores Parisienses* Maurice de Sully, Bishop of Paris, (1160–1196) forbade the feast. See Le Bachelet, *op. cit.*, 1036.

fication also of the first formation of Mary's flesh preceding its vivifying by God, or the sanctification of this very flesh because of its destiny as matter for Christ's body and the abode of the Logos.

This is referred to in the old oration of the feast from the Missal of Lyons: "God who hast pre-ordained the body of the Blessed Virgin Mary to be holy and hast preserved it from the stain of all sin," etc.<sup>18</sup> In this sentence all emphasis was laid on Mary's sanctification in the origin of her conception, when the foundation was laid for the temple. Hence, with St. Bernard they spoke especially of a "conception of the seed." In contrast to him, however, they took cover under the explanation that, what was meant by this, was only such a sanctification of the thing conceived as took place not because of the sanctity of the active conception, but in spite of its unholiness, and neither before nor after this conception, but simultaneously. This viewpoint was taken especially in the *Tractatus de conceptione S. Mariae*.<sup>19</sup>

Another apologetic writing,<sup>20</sup> unbekomingly vehement, but otherwise very clever, and aimed directly at the letter of St. Bernard, went even further. To elucidate the position then taken on the question, theologians of later date paid little or no attention to this writing. When they

<sup>18</sup> This oration appears in the *Missale incliti cenobii Athanatensis in dioecesi Lugdunensi ordinis divi Benedicti*, printed there (Ainay) in 1531. The text is of much earlier date, but it cannot be settled whether it dates back to the time of St. Bernard. See Le Bachelet, *op. cit.*, 1011.

<sup>19</sup> *PL*, CXXV, 301–18 (from Eadmerus).

<sup>20</sup> *Sermo de immaculata conceptione Virginis Mariae Matris Dei*, under the name of Peter Comestor, according to an Antwerp edition of 1536, edited by Petrus de Alva Y Astorga, *Monumenta antiqua immaculatae Conceptionis ss. Virg. Mariae ex variis authoribus antiquis tum manuscriptis quum impressis . . .*, Louvain, 1654. It is ascribed also to Richard of St. Victor and others. See a detailed analysis in Malou, *op. cit.*, II, 117–35; cf. Le Bachelet, *op. cit.*, 1015 ff.

did refer to it, it was only in testimony of the purport of the dogma, without regard to the fact that this doctrine still contained something questionable. The real writer can hardly be other than the English monk Nicholas of St. Alban,<sup>21</sup> who in his correspondence with Peter Celensis declaimed vehemently against St. Bernard. He even held that the soul of Mary was twice pierced by a sword, once under the cross, and again by the attack of St. Bernard against her conception,<sup>22</sup> for which reason St. Bernard should have appeared after his death to a friar of his order, with a stain on his breast.

This apologetic writing, referred to above, denies that the flesh of Mary had any more need of purification than that of Christ, since as a channel of salvation it could in itself be in no need of purifying. Further, it was blessed not only in the conception but before the conception, or rather, it was preserved immaculate from Adam through all succeeding centuries. The writer hints here at a fantastic opinion, which appears also in some reports of private revelations, to the effect that, before the Fall, God separated a portion of the flesh in Adam and kept it for the production of Christ and Mary. The existence of this fantastic opinion very clearly indicates that the more serious theologians of that time had every reason for the sober investigation of a doctrine, in favor of which this opinion was invented. In spite of its evident and intrinsic impos-

<sup>21</sup> The genuine written defense of Nicholas of St. Alban, *Liber de celebrandis conceptione Mariae*, was described by Edm. Bishop, *The Bosworth Psalter*, London, 1908, p. 45 (note) in a manuscript of the Bodleiana. The author of the work referred to by Scheeben, and certainly falsely ascribed to Peter Comestor, is as yet unknown. Cf. Lé Bachelet, *op. cit.*, 1015, 1024.

<sup>22</sup> Quoted in Peter de La Celle, *Epist.* 171; *PL*, CCII, 617; and again in the answer to that letter, *ibid.*, 622. About this correspondence see chapter 1, notes 20, 21, and 22. The vision with the black stain is related by Nicholas of St. Alban, *Epist.* 172; *PL*, CCII, 623.

sibility and the decisive refutation it met with, this opinion is later rather frequently repeated. St. Thomas and St. Bonaventure combatted it extensively.<sup>23</sup>

But even if the author's words are not understood in this coarse sense, they must nevertheless sound all the more strange, since, according to the example of the Fathers, it was customary to speak of a purification even in Christ's flesh which took place on His assumption of it. Christ's flesh was considered pure, not in the principles of its production, but simply in so far as it was in the person of Christ. In contrast to this author it was asserted by others, that this flesh, which was to be used by God as a means of salvation, had to be taken from the very flesh in need of purifying.<sup>24</sup> The promoters of the opinion, that the sanctification of the body precedes that of the soul, adduced the analogy of the ark of the covenant, which was considered as a specific figure of Mary's body; and they pointed out, that the ark was made of imperishable wood and inlaid with gold, even before the golden vessel with the manna was placed in it.<sup>25</sup>

Hence, when the great scholastics of the thirteenth century took up the question, it was not asked whether Mary was conceived immaculate, inasmuch as her sanc-

<sup>23</sup> St. Bonaventure, *in 3 Sent.*, dist. 3, q. 2, art. 2; St. Thomas, *in 3 Sent.*, dist. 3, q. 4, a. 1 corp. et ad 2 et 3. See also the related problem: *Utrum caro Christi in patribus fuerit peccato obnoxia?* (III, q. 31, a. 7) and also Suarez.

<sup>24</sup> *Sicut non erat decens ut pro Adam et eius successione corrupta aliquis satisficeret, qui ex illo genere non esset, ita etiam esset incongruum ut naturam infectam sanaret Dei Filius, nisi hoc ipsum quod prius infectum fuerat assumpsisset. Et ideo dicendum est quod caro Christi, secundum quod in patribus et etiam in beata Virgine, peccato infecta fuit antequam asumeretur, sed in ipsa assumptione ab omni infectione peccati purgata est, ut secundum quod est actu caro Christi, nihil in ea maculac inveniatur* (St. Thomas, *in 3 Sent.*, dist. 3, q. 4, a. 1 in corp.; see also St. Bonaventure, *op. cit.*).

<sup>25</sup> See, e.g., St. Albert the Great, *in 3 Sent.*, d. 3. a. 4.

tification took place simultaneously with the infusion of the soul itself. Instead, the question always was, whether Mary's sanctification took place before the infusion of the soul into the flesh, therefore, first in the form of a sanctification of the flesh (before, in, or after its conception or formation).<sup>26</sup> After that the freedom of the soul from original sin was a natural result of the sanctification of the flesh, or it had already been bestowed in the sanctification of the flesh. Consequently in itself the soul in no way contracted original sin, not even in so far as the "debt" was concerned. Or another question was, whether the sanctification took place only after the infusion of the soul, in the form of a redemption of the soul from the slavery of sin, to which this very union with the unsanctified flesh would subject it.

Unconditionally and most emphatically all repudiated the first view, protesting thereby against every presanctification of the flesh before the infusion of the soul and, based upon this, against a radical preservation of the soul from contracting sin apart from the flesh. They protested against the former, because inanimate flesh is not susceptible of real sanctification; against the latter, because such a preservation exempted Mary entirely from

<sup>26</sup> Most interesting is the series of questions relating to this matter as found in Alexander of Hales, *Summa theologica*, III, q. 9, membr. 2: *An b. Virgo ante suam conceptionem sanctificata fuerit (a.1)*; *an in ipsa conceptione sanctificari potuit (a.2)*; *an post conceptionem ante animae infusionem (a.3)*; *an post infusionem animae in utero matris (a.4)*; also in St. Albert the Great, in 3 Sent., dist. 3: *An b. virgo sanctificata sit in utero vel ante uterum (a.3)*; *an caro b. virginis fuit sanctificata ante animationem vel post (a.4)*; *utrum post animationem et ante nativitatem ex utero (a.5)*; in St. Bonaventure, in 3 Sent., dist. 3, p. 1, a.1: *Utrum sanctificata fuerit caro Virginis ante animationem (q.1)*; *ante peccati originalis contractionem (q.2)*; *ante nativitatem (q.3)*; in St. Thomas, in 3 Sent., dist. 3 q.1, a.1: *Utrum b. virgo sanctificata fuerit antequam conceptio carnis eius finiretur (qla 1)*; *utrum ante animationem (qla 2)*; *utrum, ante nativitatem ex utero (qla 3)*.

the universality of sin and from the need of redemption. Accordingly they taught not only that the conception of the flesh took place in sin, but also that the soul, in its infusion into the unsanctified body, was contaminated by sin, that is, tainted and affected by sin or ensnared in it. It was not realized that, between the "before" and the "after," there was an "at the same time" (*simul*), and that the difficulties advanced would be avoided by accepting the "at the same time" together with a *post natura*. Such an "at the same time" had never been advanced by the advocates of the immaculate conception.

For the sake of the argument, according to which a body, not animated by a spiritual soul, is not susceptible of sanctification in its proper sense, some had finally fallen back on the stand, that the safeguarding of the soul against contracting sin had at least to be effected by a special grace granted at the moment of the infusion of the soul. But even this preservation by a simultaneous infusion was not understood in the sense that the entry of the sanctification, as posterior in nature, presupposed the union of the soul with the body and, as a result, the "debt of sin" and the need of redemption. They represented the entry of sanctification rather as in nature prior to the infusion of the soul into the body and, therefore, as preventing not only the effective inception of the stain, but also the immediate necessity of incurring this stain. At the same time, such a meaning was attached to the simultaneous sanctification of the soul as to place it on the same level as the preservation of the flesh before its animation.

This formulation is found in the later addition to the decree, which is ascribed to St. Anselm: "the day, on

which the worthy soul of our reparatrix is created, sanctified, and infused into her most sacred body.”<sup>27</sup> According to St. Bonaventure<sup>28</sup> the matter was explained by an illustration as follows: Mary’s body represented the ark of the covenant. Her soul was the golden vessel which contained the manna as a symbol of grace. As the vessel was first filled with manna and only then placed in the ark, so also Mary’s soul was first equipped with grace and then infused into the body. In St. Bonaventure this form of the question appears the clearest. Among the more ancient scholastics, he is also the only one who, after the question concerning the sanctification of the flesh before its animation, puts the special question, “whether the soul of the Blessed Virgin was sanctified before contracting original sin?”<sup>29</sup> Here he has in mind those opponents who, while denying a purification of the flesh before the animation, conceded preservation of the soul by a grace, immediately granted to it, so that the taint of the flesh was without effect and could not communicate itself to the soul. It is evident here that the preservation from sin, implied in the sanctification before the contraction of sin, was at the time understood by both sides exclusively on the analogy of a safeguarding against actual sins, as a support of the soul in imminent danger, lest it should fall. In that way they could indeed conceive of a liberation from the danger of an imminent evil, but not of a redemption from being involved in an evil already incurred.

The whole body of theologians of the thirteenth century felt bound to accept the view that in Mary the grace of

<sup>27</sup> *PL*, CLIX, 322.

<sup>28</sup> St. Bonaventure, in *3 Sent.*, dist. 3, p. 1, a. 1, q. 2 cond.

<sup>29</sup> See note 26.

redemption presupposed her inclusion in original sin, which was not only imminent in the future, but was an actual reality. At the same time they made no distinction between a virtual and an actual involvement. That was the basis of their opposition to the sanctification before the animation and contraction of sin, practically implied in a sanctification after the animation and contraction of sin, this latter following the animation not only in the order of nature but also of time, and including both a virtual and an actual contraction of sin. Consequently, St. Anselm's utterance about Mary's perfect purity<sup>30</sup> was so explained that, taken in a strict sense, it could hold only for the time of Christ's conception, or also for the whole period of Mary's independent existence outside her mother's womb after her birth; but that it certainly had to include the earliest possible sanctification of Mary.

This last point was then already emphasized by St. Albert the Great, and still more so by Henry of Ghent and Egidius of Cologne,<sup>31</sup> by these latter so emphatically that it taught a sanctification of Mary "immediately after the first instant." These theologians only so far directly opposed the sanctification "in the first instant" as it belonged to the theory of the sanctification before the animation and before the contraction of any sin whatever. They made no serious investigation into the opposite question, whether the sanctification after the animation should, because of its principles, really be subsequent also in time and not only in nature. For that reason it can

<sup>30</sup> See chap. 4, note 9.

<sup>31</sup> Concerning the doctrine of St. Albert the Great relating to this matter, see Le Bachelet, *op. cit.*, 1049 f.; cf. Henry of Ganda, *ibid.*, 1054; cf. Egidius of Cologne, *ibid.*, 1055. An unpublished original summary of Henry's *Quodlibetum XV*, q. 13 by one of Henry's anonymous disciples was edited by P. Castagnoli, in *Divus Thomas* (Piacenza), XXXV, 361-77.

always be said, that they were not fundamentally opposed to the doctrine as now defined. On the contrary, had the question been put with adequate clearness and distinctness, they would have favored it, on the principle formulated by St. Anselm. Below, when the views of Scotus are discussed, there is a presentation of the preservation from original sin which is combatted by the theologians of the thirteenth century; it is somewhat different and perhaps clearer, but in the main amounts to the same thing. Against it even Scotus protested.

What holds good of the theologians of the thirteenth century in general, holds in particular of St. Thomas. In the complicated controversies about his view of this question and its meaning, it was a great mistake to regard so little the fact that St. Thomas could not possibly have been alone in his stand, and that here, not only his authority, but also that of the whole theology of the thirteenth century is in question. The passages in which he deals *ex professo* with the question concerning the conception of the Blessed Virgin and her first sanctification, are the following: in 3. S., dist. 3; in *Quodl.* 6, q. 5, a. 7 and in *Comp. theol.* C. 224 and III, q. 27.

A falsification of the first and the last passage by opponents of the Immaculate Conception is unthinkable according to the whole context. For the original manuscript of the saint on the third book of the *Sentences* is still extant.<sup>32</sup> It is true that someone, impelled by misdirected zeal, cut out the main part; but sufficient remains to show that what is cut out could have contained nothing but the printed text, especially the formal and

<sup>32</sup> See G. F. Rossi, in *Divus Thomas*, XXXV, 532–85; concerning the lost text relating to the Immaculate Conception, see *ibid.*, 575–85, with abundant bibliographical data.

positive denial of Mary's sanctification at the instant of the infusion into the soul, which in St. Thomas appears only here. The passage in question contains these words: "Neither at the very instant of the infusion, so that, namely, she was preserved by grace infused into her at that moment, lest she incur the original guilt."<sup>33</sup>

The attempts, which according to Serafino Porrecta were made to define the meaning of this sentence so as to indicate that, by the "preservation from incurring original sin" as here disputed by him, St. Thomas meant, at the same time, a "preservation from incurring the debt,"<sup>34</sup> would have had a better result and provided a more natural explanation, if the passage in question had been compared with the afore-mentioned utterance of St. Bonaventure. Again, if for the falsification of the article in the *Summa*,<sup>35</sup> one appeals to the testimony of John Bromyard as a contemporary of St. Thomas, it should be noted that Bromyard lived a hundred years after St. Thomas, whereas the immediate disciples of the saint, such as Egidius of Cologne,<sup>36</sup> knew only the text as we have it today.

If we keep in mind the various passages of St. Thomas mentioned above, which of course must be taken as standard, it cannot be doubted that St. Thomas positively did

<sup>33</sup> St. Thomas, in 3 *Sent.*, dist., 3, q. 1, a. 1, sol. 2.

<sup>34</sup> See Capponi a Porrecta, *Elucidationes formales in Summam theologicam sancti Thomas de Aquino*, Venice, 1588 (in II, q. 27, a. 2); cf. Le Bachelet, *op. cit.*, 1131.

<sup>35</sup> St. Thomas, IIIa, q. 27, a. 2; in the edition by Marietti, Turin, 1927, in a most uncritical note on this article, an appeal is made also to Bromyard, *Summa praedicantium*, s. v. *Maria*, art 2, n. 10 (he wrote about 1380); cf. Le Bachelet, *op. cit.*, 1079.

<sup>36</sup> Egidius of Cologne, who passes as a disciple of St. Thomas, treated the question in almost the same words as St. Thomas did and says that Mary contracted original sin, in 3 *Sent.*, dist. 3, art. 1. Cf. Le Bachelet, *op. cit.*, 1055.

not teach Mary's sanctification "at the first instant," but always disavowed it. For him, as for his contemporaries, it can and must be said that he always denied this sanctification only in the form advanced at the time, and from principles which excluded it only in that form. Even Cajetan,<sup>37</sup> himself an opponent of the thesis, admits this, and the defenders of the doctrine might have left it at that.

To elucidate the fundamental attitude of St. Thomas, it is needless, with John of St. Thomas, whom many followed in this point, to appeal to the fact that in another text,<sup>38</sup> which in general deals with the propriety and possibility of the conception of a human being without original sin, the saint himself makes a distinction between the "debt" and the "malice of sin"; that, since a person needs redemption in himself, and not only in his parents or in the flesh, he demands only, that the person incur either the "debt" or the "malice of sin." For, the "debt" of which St. Thomas here speaks is not at all the debt of sin in contrast to the sin itself. He considers rather the sin itself from the double aspect of a debt and an evil. From both aspects he as much as declares, that the liberation from original sin supposes the being conceived and born (considered by him as synonymous with the birth in the womb) in original sin; since the remission of a debt or the liberation therefrom supposes that the debt has been incurred and the evil committed.

The importance of the text lies only in this, that it shows how St. Thomas understands the original freedom from original sin to be in nothing different from the form of

<sup>37</sup> Cajetan, *Comm. in S. theol.* ad III, q. 27, a. 2; taken up in the *Editio Leonina* of St. Thomas' works, XI, 291 f.

<sup>38</sup> St. Thomas, *in 4 Sent.*, dist. 43, q. unica, a. 4, qla 1 (= *s. theol. Suppl.* q. 78, a. 1 ad3).

grace granted to the parents or to the flesh, whereby in the person conceived the stain is lifted together with the necessity of incurring it. But this in itself is but an added proof that he did not consider the debt and the stain in the person conceived apart as two separate elements, that is to say, he did not refer to their separability, because there was no occasion to do so. If he had considered this separability, he would have been, as Cajetan observes,<sup>39</sup> a bad logician to ignore it and nevertheless to argue as he did.

Certainly, St. Thomas cannot be held up as an opponent of the immaculate conception in the sense of the dogma, merely because he so often says: "Mary was conceived in original sin." Nor can his opposing sentence, "but she is not born in sin," be so explained in his view, as it refers to the "birth in the womb," with which the "conception" in the sense of the dogma coincides. For it is all too clear that, in this question, by "birth" and also by "origin of the Virgin" the saint understands the "birth in the womb."<sup>40</sup>

The passages, in which the saint should have positively pronounced in favor of the dogma, all have this objection against them, namely: if they were genuine or intended in favor of the dogma, then the saint's manner of expression when dealing with the matter *ex professo* would be incomprehensible. In particular, the apparently favorable opinion occurring occasionally in the Commentary on the Sentences,<sup>41</sup> wherein the perfect purity of the Virgin, corresponding to the principle of St. Anselm, is defined

<sup>39</sup> Cajetan, *op. cit.*, n. 6.

<sup>40</sup> See., e.g., III, q. 27, a. 2 ad 2.

<sup>41</sup> St. Thomas, in *I Sent.*, dist. 44, q. unica, a. 3 ad 3; cf. dist. 17, q. 2, a. 4 ad 3.

as "immunity from all original and actual sin," must be explained according to the classical texts already mentioned. There the saint pronounces upon the sense of this principle in its application to Mary in such a way that with it only an immunity from original sin in the birth from the womb is compatible.

Against three other passages, occurring in the explanation of texts of the Sacred Scriptures, in which the saint is supposed formally to have excluded the contraction or the incurring of original sin, most weighty and critical objections, intrinsic and extrinsic, may be alleged.<sup>42</sup> Therefore, we must be content with the fact, that in those very passages in which St. Thomas actually denies or ignores the thesis, he still clings firmly enough to the principle on which the thesis rests and in which it is implicitly contained, and thus may be said virtually to adhere to it. When he limits the "greatest purity under God" to the "greatest purity under Christ,"<sup>43</sup> then, for this requirement of the greatest possible purity under Christ, only the proof is needed that Mary's immaculate concep-

<sup>42</sup> Scheeben quotes here the *expositio salutationis angelicae* and *Comm. in epist. S. Pauli*, Rom. cap. 5, lect. 3, and Gal., cap. 3, lect. 6. The *expositio* was critically edited by J. F. Rossi, in *Divus Thomas*, XXXIV, 405–76, by insertion of the words *nec originale, nec mortale, nec veniale peccatum incurrit* (p. 472, b. 13–14), against which P. Synave protested in *Bulletin Thomiste*, IX, 579–83. See also J. de Blic, "S. Thomas et l'imm., conc.", in *Rev. apol.*, LVII, 25–36. The text in *Gal.* is certainly an apograph (see the note in the *editio Veneta* and *Parmensis*); in these same editions the text in *Rom.*, as quoted, rather gives the opposite version: *Illa est causa quare Christus peccatum originale non traxit, quia ex sola femina sine virili semine carnem accepit.*

<sup>43</sup> It alludes to *in 3 Sent.*, dist. 3, q. 1, art 1, qla 2 ad 3; see also *in 1 Sent.*, dist. 44, art. 3 corp.: *et sic humana natura in Christo nobilissima est . . . et post (sc. Christum) beata Virgo*. But somewhere else, where St. Thomas reacts to St. Anselm's text from *de Conc. Virg.* (*PL*, CLVIII, 451), he retains the words *sub Deo*; see *in 1 Sent.*, d. 44, a.3 ad 3, and also *in*, dist. 17, q. 2, a.4 ad 3.

tion is possible without damage to Christ's prerogative, in order also to conclude the reality.<sup>44</sup>

2. Scotus gave the controversy a decisive turn.<sup>45</sup> He proved that the reasons advanced for a sanctification after animation could be both possible and fitting, and required a sequence in nature, not in time. Accordingly a true redemption was conceivable in the form of a safeguarding against the stain. And since this was the most perfect redemption, the honor of the Redeemer as such demanded that He redeem His mother in this way. For if He did not show Himself to her as the perfect Redeemer, He would do so to no one else. In this concrete form the conclusion, "It could be, it was fitting, hence so it was done," advanced earlier by Pseudo-Anselm<sup>46</sup> obtained a special meaning through Scotus. It was not, as is often thought, that Scotus saw in it simply a decisive and positive proof; for he was very moderate, compared with the defenders before and after him, in advancing this thesis. But the theological difficulties raised against the thesis

<sup>44</sup> Concerning St. Thomas' attitude toward the Immaculate Conception in the sense of Scheeben, see Le Bachelet, *op. cit.*, 1050–54; 1056–60; P. Synave (in the French translation of the *Summa*), *Vie de Jesus*, I, 282–89. In the opposite sense, see particularly N. del Prado, *Divus Thomas et bulla dogmatica Ineffabilis Deus*, Fribourg, 1919 (cf. Le Bachelet, in *Rech. de Science relig.*, I, 592–613, about articles of Del Prado which preceded this posthumous work); Mandonnet, in art. "Frères Prêcheurs" in *Dict. de théol. cath.*, VI, 899 f. and in *Bulletin Thomiste*, X, 155–67. Further bibliography is given in Bittremieux, *Marialia*, pp. 317 f.

<sup>45</sup> Scotus, in 3 Sent., dist. 3, in *Opus Oxoniense* (edited by Vives, XIV) as well as the *Reportata Parisiensia* (*ibid.*, XXIII). See also C. Balic, *Joannis Duns Scoti Theologiae Marianae clementa*, Sibenik in Jugoslavia, 1933. Cf. Le Bachelet, *op. cit.*, 1073–78 and for further literature, Bittremieux, *Marialia*, p. 317.

<sup>46</sup> Eadmerus, *Tract. de conc. s. Mariae*, gives the formula: *Potuit, decuit, ergo fecit*, not literally, but has (*PL*, CLIX, 305; edition of Thurston, p. 11): *potuit, plane. Si igitur voluit, fecit* (whereby the writer advances all of the reasons of *convenientiae* which motivate an effective *volle*). His argumentation has, therefore, been summarized correctly in the terse pronouncement: *potuit, decuit, fecit*; cf. Le Bachelet, *op. cit.*, 1008.

were in principle solved by it, and out of the main difficulty itself an argument arose in favor of the thesis.

After Scotus the thesis was carried through more profoundly and emphatically by his confreres, Peter Aureolus, Francis Mayron, and by the English Carmelite John Bacon,<sup>47</sup> by the last named in connection with the *opusculum* of Pseudo-Anselm. Although their earlier theologians had held the same views as St. Thomas, the Franciscans in general soon declared themselves in favor of the thesis. The Dominicans predominantly opposed it, some even vehemently. Appealing to St. Thomas, they declared the doctrine to be heresy or at least an error in faith. The theses of John of Monzon,<sup>48</sup> referring to the immaculate conception, were censured severely by the University of Paris. This same university, which at one time had brought about the suppression of the feast of the conception, was later, at the Council of Basel, to become the most zealous champion of the dogmatic definition of the object of the feast; and it was the first university that obliged all its members to defend it.<sup>49</sup> Although a great many of the Dominicans continued the opposition for centuries, nevertheless it cannot be said that the order as such represented the opposition.

It is often accepted, that as early as the year 1263 the

<sup>47</sup> Peter Aureolus, in 3 Sent., dist. 3, q. 1. See also a *Tractatus* and the *Repercussorum* published in *Fr. Guilielmi Quarrai, Fr. Joannis Duns Scotti, Fr. Petri Aureoli, Quaestiones disputatae de immaculata conceptione*, Quaracchi, 1904, pp. 23–94; 95–153. Cf. Le Bachelet, *op. cit.*, 1081. Francis of Mayron, in 3 Sent., dist. 3 and *Tractatus de conceptione beatae Mariae Virginis*; see Le Bachelet, *op. cit.*, 1081. John of Baconsthorp (or Bacon), in 4 Sent., dist. 3, q. 3, a. 3; in his *Quodlibeta*, III, Quodl. 13 and 14, and also in 3 Sent. he combatted the opinion of Scotus; see Le Bachelet, *op. cit.*, 1082.

<sup>48</sup> Concerning the fourteen theses defended by John of Monzon in June, 1387 (four of which attacked the Immaculate Conception), see Le Bachelet, *op. cit.*, 1084–86.

<sup>49</sup> Decree of March 3, 1495, quoted by Le Bachelet, *op. cit.*, 1126.

Franciscans declared in favor of the Immaculate Conception by the introduction of the feast of Mary's conception, which took place during the time that St. Bonaventure was general of the order. Because of the manner in which St. Bonaventure explained the object of the feast, at least in later years, this conclusion is not necessarily authentic. Neither has it been proved that the saint changed his views on the question; because the genuineness of the sermons appealed to has not definitely been settled.<sup>50</sup>

Scotus' argumentation was the more cogent and pointed for the reason that, in this question, he put aside his theory concerning Christ's predestination, "foreseen before the sin." For that reason he did not attack the "immediate debt," but rather maintained it in the most forceful manner. In general, he supported, as much as possible, the view of the other theologians of the thirteenth century. For Scotus not only taught that, like all other children of Adam, Mary had received and lost the original justice in Adam, but he also claimed that she had not, by a special grace of God in her conception, obtained the original justice, lost in principle. He taught that she, therefore, any more than any other child of Adam, was in no way conceived or born in the maternal womb "with" or "in original justice." The latter is understood in the sense of an integrity of nature, in contrast with the "justice gratuitously given to the person." Consequently he denies a preservation from original sin effected by an original granting of the original justice and, therefore, by the preservation from the "lack of the original justice."

<sup>50</sup> Concerning the attitude of St. Bonaventure toward the Immaculate Conception, see Le Bachelet, *op. cit.*, 1047 f. and Bittremieux, "Le sentiment de S. Bonaventure sur L'imm. Conc.", in *Etudes Franciscaines*, XL. (1928), 367-94.

This phrase expresses the whole fundamental opposition of the other theologians of the thirteenth century to Mary's freedom from original sin; and on the face of it, Scotus admits thereby even the actual incurrence of original sin. In reality, this "lack of original justice" presents itself only as a "proximate necessity of contracting sin," the effect of which can be removed. Scotus reduced to this the actually present preservation from the contracting of original sin, that by a simultaneous grant of sanctifying grace compensation was made for the lack of the original justice by the possession of the gratuitous justice; hence, for Mary, this lack was no longer a want of a required justice, and hence was neither an injustice nor a formal sin.

Scotus<sup>51</sup> writes: "To all opposing authorities it should be answered: that all children of Adam are by nature debtors to original justice and are deservedly lacking it, because they all contract original sin from him who committed it. But if, at the first instance of the creation of the soul, a grace (*gratum faciens*, which makes one deserving) is bestowed on a person, that person, although he lacks original justice, nevertheless is never its debtor (and does not lack required justice to the extent that forms a sin); because, by the merit of another person who prevents the sin, a grace is bestowed upon him which, as far as divine acceptance is concerned, equals that justice and even excels it. Therefore, all would have original sin, unless another person should prevent it by his merits (in bestowing grace at the first instant). The authors must be explained in this way, that all natural children of Adam are

<sup>51</sup> Scotus, *in 3 Sent.* (Opus Oxoniense), dist. 3, q. 1, n. 14; edited by Vives, XIV, 171; see critical text of Balic, *op. cit.*, pp. 34 f.

sinners, that is, that because they have their nature from Adam, they lack appropriate justice because of him, unless it is bestowed upon them by someone else; but just as another person could bestow grace upon them after the first instant, he could likewise bestow it upon them at the first instant." Even after Scotus, a great many defenders of the Immaculate Conception maintained for a long time, that Mary's preservation from original sin was not effected by a granting of original justice. Later on they spoke more freely in this respect, as the Greeks had always done; in so far as the point is the material purport of original justice, it must even be said that in Mary it is restored in itself and not *in aequivalenti*.

Naturally, and only in the sense of the theologians of the thirteenth century, it must be maintained unconditionally, that in Mary original justice, as the justice of natural integrity, was not formally original. Mary's original justice was not original, in the same sense as it was in the first human being and in Christ, and as it would have been, barring the Fall, in Adam's descendants. Hers was not a justice communicated by the origin of nature as such, hence by the act forming the flesh which has to be animated. Her justice was not original, in so far as this act is of itself immediately directed to the producing of nature as integral nature, and, therefore, in so far as the supernatural and divine influence, required for it, accompanies this act, in the same way as God cooperates in the vivifying of the flesh.

On this point the early scholastic view relating to Mary's conception is, at least in its phrasing, diametrically opposed to that of the Greeks. Although the view of the Greeks always allows for an explanation by which it can

be reconciled not only with the dogma of the universality of sin, but also with that early scholastic view, still the thesis is presented more clearly and harmoniously in the form arising out of the early scholastic controversies. In early Scholasticism, Mary's privilege is formally and immediately reduced to a personal justification and goodness, or was original in the person. And just as this rests on Mary's personal worthiness, so also it is communicated to her person as such, as it comes forth from the mouth of the Creator as the "spirit animating her flesh." At the same time it is only the perfect form of that goodness and justification, whereby the other children of Adam are freed from original sin by a personal communion with Christ. Even the opinion of Scotus had to be elucidated and elaborated still further. However, if the earlier and later champions of the thesis had continued to display calmness and solicitude similar to that of Scotus, the good cause would have been more easily won. At the Council of Basel, John of Segovia and John of Torquemada,<sup>52</sup> both Spaniards and the main speakers for the opposing sides, brought out by their voluminous works, and each in his own way, some very important points. Owing, perhaps, to the influence of the work of John of Torquemada, St. Antoninus of Florence, O.P.—the only saint to do so after Scotus—still opposed the thesis.<sup>53</sup>

In the second half of the fifteenth and the first half of

<sup>52</sup> John of Segovia, *Septem allegationes et totidem avisamenta pro informatione Patrum consilii Basiliensis . . . circa ss. v. Mariae immaculatam conceptionem . . .* (edited by Peter of Alva, Brussels, 1664). See Le Bachelet, *op. cit.*, 1110 f. John of Turrecremata, *Tractatus de veritate conceptionis b. Virginis, pro facienda relatione coram patribus concilii Basiliensis . . .* (edited by Alb. Duimus, Rome, 1547 and again by E. B. Pusey, Oxford, 1869). See Le Bachelet, *op. cit.*, 1111–13.

<sup>53</sup> St. Antoninus, *Summa theologica* (Vernona, 1740), I, 547–54.

the sixteenth century, the doctrine encountered offensive and violent opposition from the Dominicans, Bandelli and Spina, who converted Torquemada's serious work into incendiary pamphlets.<sup>54</sup> Much more moderate was Cajetan before the Council of Trent, and still more so Bartholomew of Medina after the same council.<sup>55</sup> On the other hand, and in opposition to Cajetan, the most enthusiastic and clever champion of the thesis was another Dominican, Ambrogio Catarino.<sup>56</sup>

#### THE OBJECTIONS AGAINST THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

3. At first the objections against the thesis consisted only in the dogmatic principle of the universality of sin and the need of redemption. Incidentally reference was made also to Mary's participation in the punishments of sin, or rather, in some penalties, bodily suffering and death. In the opposition of later date these were multiplied and strengthened by reference to a number of texts in the Fathers.<sup>57</sup> Most of the quotations, however, are mere variations of the dogma of the universality of sin

<sup>54</sup> Vincentius Bandelli, *Libellus recollectorius de veritate conceptionis b. virg. gloriosae* (appeared without the author's name), Milan, 1475, and *Tractatus de singulari puritate et praerogativa Salvatoris nostri J.C.*, Bologna, 1481. See Le Bachelet, *op. cit.*, 1120–24. Bartholomew Spina, *Tract. de universal corruptione generis humani seminaliter propagati*, Venice, 1526.

<sup>55</sup> Cajetan, *Tract. de conc. B. Virg.*, in *Opuscula Omnia* (Lyons, 1588). II, opusc. 1, 137–42; Bartholomew of Medina, in *Sum. theol.*, III, q. 27.

<sup>56</sup> Six opuscula of Ambrogio Catarino about this question were collected and edited by Peter of Alva, *Monumenta dominicana pro immaculata conceptione*, Louvain, 1666. See Le Bachelet, *op. cit.*, 1130 f. Concerning the general attitude of the Dominican Order, see Rouard de Card, *L'Ordre des frères prêcheurs et L'immaculatée Conception*, Louvain, 1864 (in an open letter addressed to Mgr. Malou).

<sup>57</sup> These texts were particularly from Torquenada and later from Bandelli and Spina. Concerning these texts see Petavius, *Dogn. Theol., dc incarn.*, XIV, chap. 2, and Perrone, *de imm. B.M.V. conc., pars 1, cap. 6*.

and of the need of redemption. They only repeat what Augustine taught in this respect. In them Augustine refuted, for himself and for his successors, what appeared as the conclusive force of these texts, by the exception which he makes for the Mother of the Lord, since these texts establish only a general rule, without expressly including Mary.

A real difficulty is contained only in those texts which so formulate the general rule as to make the definite exception of Christ alone, or which contain expressions in reference to Mary which seem to include her under the general rule. But in their true sense they, too, say no more than that in herself, according to her human origin and human nature, Mary was liable to original sin.

All or almost all the texts, which positively and directly reckon Mary under the general rule, do this in so far as they designate Mary's flesh as "flesh of sin," and speak of an earlier or later purification of this flesh. But Christ's flesh also is sometimes called "flesh of sin," not indeed as it is in Him, but as it was essentially and virtually in Mary and in His forefathers. In its assumption by Christ, this flesh was then purified. Apart from this, the expressions in question as referring to Mary mean only, that she herself was subject to sin according to her flesh, that is, according to her carnal nature, and this flesh according to its immediate origin. In order to be free from sin, this flesh was, therefore, in need of a purifying influence, whereby the actual incurring of impurity, virtually contained in its origin, was prevented.

The very fact that these texts neither call Mary herself a sinner, nor speak of a purification of her person, but, on the contrary, refer specifically to her flesh, gives us to

understand that, as to the community of sin, Mary cannot be placed on a level with the rest of mankind. Like the theologians of the thirteenth century, some ecclesiastical writers may emphasize the "flesh of sin" in Mary in such a manner as to imply in her a taint already incurred personally. On the other hand, some made mention also of a later purification from sin through Christ's conception; but by that, apparently, is not meant a purification from original sin as a debt, but only the purification from certain consequences or material elements of original sin. For the rest, even the Greek Fathers mention another and later purification of Mary, in the same sense as one speaks of a purification of the angels by a higher and greater glorification. By this is meant a purification of the soul, whereby it was made susceptible of a closer union with God and a nearer resemblance to the purity and simplicity of the Godhead.

## CHAPTER VI

# Mary's Permanent Immunity from All Sin<sup>1</sup>

### OUTLINE OF THE DOCTRINE

THE same reasons which require that Mary's holiness should date from her very origin, thus preserving her at the outset from original sin, require also such a perfection of holiness as would enable her to triumph completely, *omni ex parte*, over sin. Hence they require the same immunity from all that in one way or another is called sin, a privilege such as distinguished the first human couple before the Fall; secondly, in contrast to the first human couple, they require a security or strengthening against sin similar to that of the "new man," Christ. This perfection of Mary's holiness, the effect of which, in the sense of St. Augustine, can be called, as in Adam and Christ, the "perfection of justice," was indeed granted in the very first sanctification which took place in her own conception. It was perfected in one way or another in Christ's conception. For, like Mary's relation to Christ, her communion with and likeness to Him in general was made perfect in that conception.

<sup>1</sup> See literature: Peter de La Celle and Nicholas of St. Alban, *epist.* 171–73; Alexander of Hales, *Summa theologiae*, *pars 3*, *q. 9*, *membr. 3*; in connection with Peter Lombard, *Sentent.*, I.3, d.3, St. Thomas, St. Bonaventure, Egidius Romanus; St. Albert the Great, *Mariale*, *q. 133–39*; St. Thomas, *Comp. theol.*, C.224 and III, *q. 27*, *a.3*; also Medina, Suarez, Vasquez; St. Peter Canisius, *De virg. Deipara*, lib. 4; Passaglia, *De imm. conc.*, sect. 6, cap. 2 and cap. 6, art. 3.

The complete immunity from all that is called sin embraces, first, the involuntary and natural movements of the irregular appetite, the incentives to sin, such as material sins or inclinations to sin, or also sins of nature. Secondly, it embraces the fully voluntary or semi-voluntary acts of the will, which constitute formal, actual, and personal sins. In regard to the first, this immunity was directly and formally granted in the complete preservation from original sin effected by the first sanctification of Mary, in so far as the grace of sanctification in her case possessed the same power as the grace of the original state, lost by Adam's sin. Far from being excluded, it is rather very probable that in Mary, at least after her second sanctification, this freedom was more complete than in the original state, because it thereby attained a more special likeness to the analogous privilege of Christ. In respect to the second, her immunity from sin was indeed already effected in part by Mary's first sanctification, in so far as this sanctification was equivalent to the grace of the original state. Hence it excluded every inclination to sin, and included the proximate and perfect ability to avoid all and every sin, even the least.

In the principal point, namely, the assurance of a permanent use of this power, whereby the effective avoiding of all sin is infallibly guaranteed, this privilege is a specific quality of the grace in the new and heavenly Eve as bride of the divine Adam. For, with Him, she was to be the principle of the constant restoration and firm foundation of holiness, lost by our first parents. Accordingly, this is considered also as a specific effect of Mary's second sanctification. It is connected with her first sanctification only so far as it was allied to the second and was attended

by the protection which is due to Christ's bride because of her Bridegroom.

In both respects Mary's immunity from sin is represented by illustrations of the biblical figures which mutually complete each other: the ark of the covenant, made from imperishable wood, lined inside and out with the purest gold and overshadowed by the glory of God; and the celestial woman clothed with the sun. In these, the first figure preferably represents the first aspect, the second figure, the second aspect of Mary's purity.

With regard to both privileges the real and absolutely certain element will first be established, in order to link with it a more precise designation of its nature and principle.

#### MARY'S IMMUNITY FROM CONCUPISCENCE

On the basis of the almost complete unanimity of the Fathers and theologians, at least since the fifth century, and of the close connection of this doctrine with tradition and the definition of the Immaculate Conception, it is, if not *de fide*, at least *fidei proximum*, that Mary never experienced any actual movement of concupiscence. This immunity from concupiscence really belongs to Mary's revealed communion with Christ in the unconquerable and victorious enmity against the devil and his works, or to the grace to conquer sin from every aspect. The result of this immunity must inevitably be, that sin not only had no dominion over her, but also that it could neither exist nor operate in her. Moreover, it belongs to that absolute and exalted virginal purity which tradition ascribes to Mary; to that fullness of grace and justice whereby, according to the traditional idea, Mary excels not only

all fallen humanity but also Eve before her fall, and whereby, as bride of the heavenly Adam, she resembles Christ. Finally it belongs also to that heavenly and spiritual characteristic of Mary's entire being and life, because of which the Fathers put her on a level with the angels and even set her above them.

On the one hand, this immunity from concupiscence is a special result of Mary's freedom from all, even the least, personal sin,<sup>2</sup> without which privilege this immunity cannot exist in a natural way; on the other, it is a result of the freedom from original sin and indeed in a twofold manner. First, the presence of the movements of concupiscence is always a sign of contracted original sin or, in the justified person, it is a remnant of it.<sup>3</sup> Secondly, because of intrinsic and extrinsic reasons calling for the preservation from every taint of original sin, and especially by reason of the supernatural characteristic of Mary's person, the safeguarding against every stain of original sin includes the preservation from all that belongs, even remotely, to the consequences and essence of original sin.

Since the advent of Scholasticism, agreement on this point is unanimous among the theologians, even among those who do not teach the Immaculate Conception.

It is true that shortly before (about 1275), Peter de La Celle maintained, in his interesting correspondence with Nicholas of St. Alban, that the "inclination to sin" was not excluded in Mary before Christ's conception, but belonged to the merit of her struggle against sin.<sup>4</sup> But after

<sup>2</sup> This point was established at the Council of Trent, Sess. VI, can. 23 (Denz., no. 833).

<sup>3</sup> See Passaglia, *op. cit.*, no. 1549.

<sup>4</sup> Peter de La Celle, *Epist.* 171, *PL*, CCII, 619 f.

the thorough and emphatic criticism of this assertion by his friend<sup>5</sup> he declared, that he understood the "sense of sin" in Mary to be similar to that of Christ. He writes: "Mary indeed felt the inclination to sin not to be injured, but to be tested by it; not to fall, but to conquer; she felt it outwardly, not inwardly; at the suggestion of the enemy, she felt it not by delighting in the flesh or consenting in spirit; she felt it by repelling him, not by receiving or admitting him."<sup>6</sup> In fact, in his very first letter he had said: "I concede and believe indeed that by a precedent operation of God, she never felt the fiery stimulus of sinful inclination, not even moderately"; he added, of course: "The other impediments of human frailty, however, she could feel before the divine conception, but she in no way consented to them."<sup>7</sup> And inasmuch as grace came first and prepared the Virgin, the excitation of sin expired and there remained in her only a sepulchre, until the Holy Spirit came and consigned the deceased to a perpetual sepulchre and slew the old serpent with his sword."

Hence Jerome<sup>8</sup> said: "Although other virgins imitate her even as far as the conception of offspring, all that is effected in her is divine. Before this, indeed, the womb of the Virgin, although pure, untainted, and foreign to the

<sup>5</sup> Nicholas of St. Alban, *inter epist. Petri Cell.* 172; *PL*, CCII, 622-28.

<sup>6</sup> Peter de La Celle, *Epist.* 173, *PL*, CCII, 630.

<sup>7</sup> Here Peter appears to indicate the opinion, which was criticized later by the theologians of the thirteenth century, that Mary had the *fomes peccati*, not to the extent that it incited her to evil, but so far as it was an obstacle to good. Later on he explained, that he understood this in the same sense as the Apostle understood in Christ the *tentatio per omnia absque peccato* (*Epist.* 173; *PL*, CCII, 630). His opinion, in the main correct, is supported also by what follows immediately.

<sup>8</sup> Here is meant Pseudo-Jerome—Paschas. Radbertus, *Epist. Cogitis me*, no. 7; *PL*, XXX, 128 f. (where, instead of *usque ad conceptum partus*, it reads *contemptum*).

contagion of sin, although holy, was still clothed in human lowness, that is, it was as wool made white by bleaching.<sup>9</sup> But when the Holy Ghost approached, this same wool turned to purple, as it were, dyed with the blood of the conchylium of purple shell-fish; and she herself became a mother without sexual union, so that she became, what she had not fully been, the purest purple, for the clothing and the glory most suitable for the highest King, so that from then on no one was allowed to use her but God alone. Consequently after the conception, she merited a crystal solidity, since, before this fullness of grace, she had not divested herself of her delicacy. This solidity was pure, holy, and immaculate, and could in no way be overcome in consent and if, some way or other, temptation beat upon it, that was not to injure, but to test it, not for the mortification of conscience, but for a confirmation in grace and a demonstration of perseverance.”<sup>10</sup>

The vague explanation of Peter Lombard,<sup>11</sup> that “in Christ’s conception Mary was purified from all sins by the Holy Ghost,” was one of the main points attacked by the sharp criticism of Walter of St. Victor.<sup>12</sup> In the words of the letter *Cogitis me* just quoted, the more ancient Latin tradition is summarized; also, in Peter Damian by

<sup>9</sup>. . . *uterus Virginis quamvis mundus, quamvis impollutus et alienus a contagione peccati, quamvis sanctus, tamen adhuc vilitate humanitatis induitur, ut ita dicam, ac si lana caudidissima suique coloris dealbata* (i.e., like wool blanched by bleaching). Instead of *suique*, Scheeben makes it *mirique* and gives as explanation: “like wool blanched by bleaching.” The meaning seems to be rather “white by its own color.” Further *on* instead of *uri* he reads *vinci*.

<sup>10</sup> Peter de La Celle, *Epist.* 171; *PL*, CCII, 619.

<sup>11</sup> Peter Lombard, *Sentent.* I, 3, dist. 3; *PL*, CXLII, 760 f.

<sup>12</sup> Walter of St. Victor, *Contra quatuor labyrinthos Franciae*, lib. III; *PL*, CXCIX, 1154–56 (Excerpta of Du Boulay).

the words: "The Virgin's flesh, although assumed from Adam, did not incur the taint of Adam's sin, but her singular purity of continence was changed into the splendor of eternal light."<sup>13</sup> St. John Damascene gives the Greek tradition when he writes: "The immaculate Virgin, who did not incur any earthly affections, but was nourished by heavenly thoughts, did not return to the earth, but, being a living heaven, was received into the heavenly tabernacles."<sup>14</sup>

Against the theological basis of this privilege the objection was raised, that immunity from concupiscence does not essentially belong to sanctity. For, as in St. Paul, the highest degree of holiness can exist in the soul side by side with the "law of the members." But in any case this immunity belongs to the ideal perfection of justice, or the sanctification of one's whole life. Mary's unique dignity and her very position as an ideal example of the effects of redemptive grace required perfect purity, not only of her disposition, but also of her whole life.

Against the doctrine itself the objection was raised, that this immunity, by removing the opportunity for spiritual effort in the struggle against concupiscence, would deprive Mary of the merit she would otherwise gain thereby. As St. Thomas<sup>15</sup> remarks, in Mary it is not necessary to assume every opportunity of meriting; the more so, since she had very special occasions and opportunities of exercising the highest degree of self-renunciation and self-denial by the fact that she had to sacrifice her divine Son and to be co-bearer of all His sufferings. As for the

<sup>13</sup> St. Peter Damian (or rather Nicholas of Clairvaux), *Sermo 40 in ass. virg.*; *PL*, CXLIV, 721.

<sup>14</sup> St. John Damascene, *Or. 2 in Deip. dorm.*, no. 2; *PG*, XCVI, 725.

<sup>15</sup> St. Thomas, IIIa, q. 27, a.3 ad 2.

fight against sin, this she could and had to carry on, under the special circumstances which witnessed the sin of the angels and of our first parents; and more especially in the combatting of the objective temptation to pride by the profoundest humility. Though exalted to the sublime grace of the divine motherhood, this virtue reached in her the greatest depths of humility in the confession of her own nothingness, just as in Christ, despite the divinity of His person, it reached the highest degree of self-abasement. In general: from the point of view of her personal, moral, and meritorious works, the humility and obedience of Mary must be emphasized even more than her controlling of earthly and sensual passions, and must especially be recognized in the keeping of her virginity.

Among theologians, views differ in regard to the manner in which this permanent immunity from the movements of concupiscence was accomplished in Mary, and in which their cause, the incitation, was rendered ineffectual, or suppressed. They all agree, that the checking and suppression of that cause occurred after the conception of Christ, through a divine influence which can and must be designated as an extinction of the excitation of sin.

As to the period before the conception of Christ, what was taught by some theologians, especially those who did not hold to the Immaculate Conception (therefore, almost all the theologians of the thirteenth century, particularly Thomas and Bonaventure), was a binding or quieting of concupiscence. On the other hand, others advocate an extinction of the excitation from the beginning, which was perfected, more or less, after the conception of Christ. However, the latter mostly under the name of original

extinction essentially claim no more than do the former under the name of binding. However, the former, by the extinction effected later, may have understood more than did the latter by the completion of the extinction already accomplished.

According to all the principles pertaining to this matter, it must be definitely admitted that, from the moment of Mary's conception, immunity from concupiscence was established and confirmed in her, in that form at least in which it existed in the original state as an element of the incorruption, integrity, justice, and original innocence. If and in so far as it can and must be designated as an extinction, or rather, as the complete absence of the *fomes*, in the original state, this must also be the case in Mary.

Consequently, in Mary this freedom should be traced not only to a divine protection, but also to a permanent and interior gift of grace. In fact, in the sense given the explanation of this absence of the *fomes* in the original state by St. Thomas and the entire contemporary teaching of Scholasticism, it may be traced to such a gift of grace as inwardly glorified and purified her entire nature. Hence, the flesh was subject to and entirely ruled by the spirit in such a way that not only was it unable to act in an irregular manner contrary to the intellect, but it was powerless to act at all without a previous assent of the rational will.

St. Thomas contradicts this doctrine by emphatically placing the suppression of the *fomes*, as it took place in Mary's first and personal sanctification, in opposition to that which existed in the original justice, and by maintaining that, in Mary, the *fomes* was merely tied down, not

extinct. However, he explains the shackling of the *fomes* in Mary in substantially the same way as many theologians of later date explain the absence of the *fomes* in the original state. He explains it as being effected by a grace which prevents the irregular movements of concupiscence by means of an interior and supernatural armor together with an external protection from God. In any case, by his term, binding, he implies as much as do the other theologians, notably Suarez, by the term, extinction, which must equal the original absence of the *fomes*. Here, the terms, extinction and binding, have in general an indefinite meaning. Even the expression, absence of the *fomes*, in the original state, as understood in the sense of St. Thomas, can be reduced to a mere binding or quieting of concupiscence, in so far as the interior possibility for the revival of concupiscence is not here excluded as in the state of glory, because the grace which suppresses it can be lost. Consequently, if one wishes also to call the absence of the *fomes* in the original state a binding, in contrast to the state of glory, then in view of Mary's first sanctification it may be spoken of also only as a binding of the *fomes*. However, under all circumstances it is better to say that, in Mary, concupiscence is extinguished or destroyed, because the grace by which the suppression of concupiscence is conditioned cannot be lost.

Under this supposition, we may, with all the theologians, accept a completion of the original immunity from concupiscence for the period after the conception of Christ. This completion, it would appear, occurred not by degrees only, but essentially, so that the second immunity is to the first as the extinction to the binding, the destroying to the quieting, or more correctly, as the eradicating

to the binding and the complete annihilation to the simple quelling.<sup>16</sup> For, the union of Mary's flesh with that of Christ, effected by Christ's conception, naturally requires in her a purity which is formed according to that of Christ. But the purity of Christ's flesh shares, in a special manner, in that of the glorified body in which the movements of the flesh precedent to the intellect are forever impossible from within.

In this respect indeed, Mary's likeness to Christ is not adequate, nor, even in her second sanctification, is the contrast to the freedom of the original state as pronounced as in Christ in His first sanctification. Nevertheless, it seems that such a contrast must be accepted according to the nature of the matter, as well as according to the expressions used by the Fathers, who presume that, in the conception of Christ, a second, more complete and definite purification of Mary's flesh took place. For, in the supposition that the first purification restored the purity of the original state, the second can be considered only as a sort of anticipation of the purity of the glorified state.

#### MATERIAL FOR THIS QUESTION FOUND IN VASQUEZ<sup>17</sup>

What he calls binding of the *fomes*, St. Thomas explains especially in the *Compendium theologiae* and in the *Summa*. In the *Compendium* he says: "Irregular movements come from this, that the sensitive appetite, being the subject of these passions, is not so subject to reason, as not sometimes to be moved to something apart from the order of reason, and at times, even against reason, wherein consists the movement of sin. Now, the sensitive appetite

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Peter de La Celle's text already quoted.

<sup>17</sup> Vasquez, in III *Sum. theol.*, disp. 118.

of the Blessed Virgin was so subject to her reason through the power of her sanctifying grace, that it never went against her reason, but always remained within the order of reason; yet it could have had some unexpected movements not regulated by reason. The sensitive appetite in our Lord Jesus Christ was something more. For in Him, the inferior appetite was so subject to reason as to be moved to nothing except what was within the order of reason. It was reason which ordered and permitted the inferior appetite to be moved by its own motion. It seems that what belonged to the integrity of the first state was, that the inferior powers were totally subject to reason. This subjection, however, was lost by the sin of the first man . . . : hence there remains rebellion and insubordination of the lower powers against reason, which is called the *fomes* of sin . . . Because the inferior powers in the Blessed Virgin were not totally subject to reason, that is, they had not a movement which was not preordained by reason, and yet were so restrained by the power of grace that they in no way were moved against reason: we usually say, that after her (first) sanctification the Blessed Virgin had the *fomes* indeed in substance or essence, but bound.”<sup>18</sup>

By the substance or essence of the *fomes* the saint understands that the appetite of the senses can generally anticipate the judgment of the intellect, because it is not completely subject to the intellect, that is, not thoroughly penetrated and governed by the spiritual power of the soul. He bases the contrast between the binding of the *fomes* with its extinction and absence on the fact alone that, on this supposition, the complete avoidance of ir-

<sup>18</sup> St. Thomas, *Comp. theol.*, c.244; cf. IIIa, q.27, a.3 corp. and a.3 ad 1.

regular movements is possible only by a strong spiritual vigilance of the soul, together with a special protection from God. Consequently, nothing is more foreign to his meaning than to say, the binding of the *fomes* consists only in this, that God prevents its movements from without.

In the extinction or absence of the *fomes*, many theologians of later date allow a survival even in Mary of what St. Thomas calls the essence of the *fomes*. Their teaching, therefore, did not go beyond his; in fact, they even remain far behind him. For, as in the first couple, so in Mary even after Christ's conception, they explain the absence of the *fomes* in such a way that, apart from interior grace, it depended also on a permanent protection from God. To St. Thomas, as to his contemporaries, the absence of the *fomes* is identical with the integrity of the flesh, which follows from the perfect power of reason over the flesh, or which conditions the latter, and in consequence of which the irregular movements simply fail to make themselves felt, because the untarnished flesh—i.e., the flesh thoroughly penetrated and governed, glorified and purified by the full spiritual power of the soul—acts only under the influence of the rational will. In the first human couple, St. Thomas limits this conception by the expression, "it seems," as not quite certain, but only probable. In Mary, however, he applies it unconditionally to the period after Christ's conception. As to the time preceding this, he suggests only a probability, that the complete integrity of the flesh was not yet present.

On the fact alone that St. Thomas, like St. Bonaventure, considers the absence of the *fomes* in the above-mentioned sense as the integrity of the flesh, does the argument rest

which they both adduce for the idea of a later extinction of the *fomes*. They argue that it was no more consistent, before Christ's conception, for anyone to be free, according to the flesh, from the punishment of original sin,<sup>19</sup> than for anyone to rise to immortal life before Christ's resurrection. Carefully considered, their reason amounts only to this, that, before Christ's conception, Mary could not, according to the flesh, obtain that perfect purity which answers to the resurrection unto the immortal life of glory. In any case, because of Mary's quite exceptional position, this general reason can be no more conclusive here, than can the general law of original sin be applicable to Mary.

The text from the Sacred Scriptures, which is here applied by St. Thomas to Mary; "And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel came by the way of the east: and the earth shone with His majesty,"<sup>20</sup> indicates perhaps, that by Mary's second state of purity he understands something higher than of the original state. However, if this is not the case, he infers in the concept of the extinction more than do most advocates of the original extinction of the *fomes*, after as well as before Christ's conception.

Connected with this question is the following, "whether, from the beginning, Mary possessed original justice." According to what has been said, St. Thomas denies this, not only for the beginning of her existence, but for the whole period preceding the second sanctification. But also very many theologians, who taught the immaculate conception, held with Scotus that, because of what has

<sup>19</sup> St. Thomas, IIIa, q. 27, a. 3 corp.; St. Bonaventure, *in 3 Sent.*, d. 3, p. 1, a. 2, q. 2.

<sup>20</sup> Ezech. 43:2.

been said, Mary did not yet possess original justice in the proper and strict sense of the word. First, she received her justice, not by means of her natural origin, but as a privilege for her person. Secondly, neither did she possess all the effects of the original justice, e.g., freedom from suffering. Nor finally, according to some, was she given freedom from concupiscence in as perfect a degree as the first human couple.

The full and plain truth is, that, from the beginning, Mary possessed in its entirety original justice, not indeed originally, but personally, so far as this justice rests on inner perfection and, in its effects, comes under the concept of justice, or of "being just," not only under that of being sound.<sup>21</sup>

#### FREEDOM FROM PERSONAL SINS

Certain as is Mary's freedom from all motions of concupiscence, it is formally even more certain, because so declared as Catholic doctrine, that "Mary never really committed an actual or personal sin,"<sup>22</sup> neither mortal sin, whereby she would have lost sanctifying grace, nor venial sin of whatever kind, whereby she would have stained the robe of grace. The theological proof is found in the traditional idea of the perfect purity of the Mother of God, of Mary's complete likeness to Christ, of the absolute contrast of the heavenly with the earthly Eve, as also of Mary's typical relation to the Church, whose ideal purity was preferably represented in her.

<sup>21</sup> Concerning this point, see Suarez, *in III, de myst. vitae Christi*, disp. 4, sec. 6.

<sup>22</sup> This point was established by the Council of Trent, Sess. VI, can. 23 (Denz., no. 833).

The maintaining of this idea in support of Mary's freedom from personal sins is based even more clearly and firmly on the teaching of the Sacred Scriptures concerning Mary's union with Christ in the enmity against the devil, than in regard, e.g., to her freedom from concupiscence. It rests also on the teaching concerning the most singular protection of God and Christ, which is bound up with her fullness of grace. For, Christ's love for the Church, whereby the latter was to be kept without "stain or wrinkle,"<sup>23</sup> had to be shown in a most perfect manner in His Mother as the heart of the Church. Again it rests on the absolute spotlessness of Christ's bride, as the latter is presented in the Canticle of Canticles and in the figure of the "Woman clothed with the sun."<sup>24</sup>

The temporary eclipse of this doctrine in some Fathers of more ancient times is amply offset by the unanimous doctrine of the entire tradition since the Council of Ephesus. Moreover, this eclipse was limited locally, and the utterances in question are not at all positive proofs of an existing ecclesiastical tradition. They show only that the ecclesiastical idea of Mary's purity had not as yet penetrated everywhere in its full force and meaning.

The Council of Trent gave the official pronouncement of the Catholic doctrine: "If any one shall say that a person once justified . . . can for the rest of his life avoid all sins even the least, unless by a special privilege of God, such as the Church holds concerning the Blessed Virgin, let him be anathema."<sup>25</sup> In the Middle Ages, the

<sup>23</sup> Eph. 5:27.

<sup>24</sup> Cant. 4:7; Apoc. 12:1; cf. St. Bernard, *Serm. Dom. infra Oct. Ass.*, no. 3; *PL*, CLXXXIII, 431.

<sup>25</sup> Denz., no. 833.

freedom from all actual sins was the more emphatically stressed, according as the initial freedom from original sin was still enveloped in obscurity. Evading the Immaculate Conception, they explained freedom from sin as the specific effect of the first sanctification of the Mother of God. St. Bernard writes: "I am of the opinion that a more abundant blessing of sanctification descended on her, which not only sanctified her birth, but also kept her immune from sin, a blessing bestowed on no other living woman. It was very becoming that, by a privilege of singular holiness, the Queen of virgins should have led a life without sin, in order that she, whilst she brought forth the destroyer of sin and death, might obtain the gift of life and justice."<sup>26</sup> St. Augustine especially held this freedom from sin in his peremptory exception in favor of Mary.<sup>27</sup>

In the Latin Church, this doctrine never weakened. But in the East, where Mary's exemption from original sin always stood in the foreground, freedom from actual sin, oddly enough, was for some time left to conjecture even by Fathers of note, and this in part for the same theological reasons from which, in the West, doubts arose as to the Immaculate Conception. In contrast to the spiritual perfection of the celestial Adam, the standard of weakness based on the nature of woman was given too much prominence in the new Eve, whose privileges far surpassed those of the old.

The unfavorable utterances of the Fathers in question, on which St. Thomas touches too briefly,<sup>28</sup> are treated at

<sup>26</sup> St. Bernard, *Epist. 174 ad can. Lugdun.*; *PL*, CLXXXII, 334.

<sup>27</sup> St. Augustine, *de nat. et grat.*, c. 36, no. 42.

<sup>28</sup> St. Thomas, IIIa, q. 27, a. 4 ad 2 et 3.

length by Sixtus of Sienna, St. Peter Canisius, Petavius, and Newman.<sup>29</sup>

In the West, Tertullian in his book *De carne Christi*, written in his Montanist period, in which he claims that by her faith Mary wiped out Eve's unbelief,<sup>30</sup> makes this utterly unfounded statement. He says: "With the brethren of Jesus, Mary did not believe in Him and hence must yield to Martha and Mary Magdalen in faith."<sup>31</sup> This is the coarsest utterance of the patristic literature, but it is self-condemnatory.

Later, the writer of the *Quaestiones in Novo Testamento*,<sup>32</sup> whose views in general are incorrect, also dealt with Mary's doubt at Christ's death. From the known Catholic Fathers only one text is quoted, that of St. Hilary of Poitiers. In that text Simeon's prophecy is explained by the sword of God's judgment. The text reads: "When that excellent virgin of God shall have come before the severe judgment, who shall dare to wish that she be judged by God?"<sup>33</sup> But the text is too indistinct to be used as proof for anything.

In the East, unfavorable utterances are found in the writings of the most influential Fathers, even down to the time of Cyril of Alexandria, the herald of the *Theotocos*, and in the contemporaries of St. Augustine; and they are

<sup>29</sup> Sixtus of Siena, *Bibliotheca sancta*, lib. 5 *passim*; St. Peter Canisius, *De virg. Deipara*, lib. 4, especially c. 27 and 28; Petavius, *Dogm. theol.*, lib. 14, c. 1; Newman, *A letter to Pusey*, pp. 131–46.

<sup>30</sup> Tertullian, *De carne Christi*, c. 17 (*PL*, II, 782).

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, c. 7; *PL*, II, 767 f.

<sup>32</sup> *Quaestiones Veteris et Novi Testamenti* (in Migne among the works of St. Augustine and quoted by St. Thomas, IIIa, q. 27, a. 4, vid. qd. 2), q. 73; *PL*, XXXV, 2267. Souter provided a critical edition in *Corpus scriptorum eccl. lat.* I, Vienna, 1908.

<sup>33</sup> St. Hilary, *Tract. super Psalmos*, in Ps. 118, litt. III, no. 12; *PL*, IX, 523.

of two kinds. Associating themselves with Origen,<sup>34</sup> who otherwise has some very fine texts relative to Mary's moral perfection, St. Basil and St. Cyril of Alexandria<sup>35</sup> explain the words of Simeon, in reference to the sword which should pierce Mary's soul, as the sword of temptation to doubt Christ's divinity, to which Mary succumbed under the cross; like the disciples, she too was scandalized in Christ. Origen and Basil stated clearly that here Mary really failed. They refer to the assertion, that Christ died for Mary's sins also as for those of all mankind, and that she would not otherwise have belonged to the number of the redeemed. The explanation of St. Thomas,<sup>36</sup> that the point at issue here is not a doubt of infidelity, but of wonder and of inquiry, is, therefore, not satisfactory. Both utterances are really an altogether fallacious exegetical and theological explanation, not a testimony of tradition. For the rest, the fact that positive tradition relative to Mary's holiness was not at the time more definite, should create little surprise, since even the most important dogmas concerning the divinity of Christ and the Holy Ghost were as yet much neglected.

On the other hand, it is true that Cyril states most emphatically, that Mary was seized with fear and suffered also a certain defeat because of her feminine weakness, and that for that reason Christ gave her John to strengthen and comfort her. But he considers this doubt only a weakness, not a fault, still less a grave offense. Even so his declaration is at sharp variance with Mary's heroic perseverance, strong in faith, under the cross, a

<sup>34</sup> Origen, *Hom. 17 in Lc.*; PG, XIII, 1845.

<sup>35</sup> St. Basil, *epist. 259 ad Optimum*; PG, XXXII, 965–68;—Cyril of Alexandria, *in Joan. 12*; PG, LXXIV, 661–65.

<sup>36</sup> St. Thomas, IIIa, q. 27, a. 4 ad 2.

characteristic which was so correctly and forcefully elucidated by St. Ambrose.<sup>37</sup> The contrast is all the more marked, since Cyril explains Mary's presence under the cross merely by saying that with the other women she wept as women do. A similar explanation of Mary's doubt at the Annunciation is found in Pseudo-Proclus.<sup>38</sup>

Again, St. John Chrysostom<sup>39</sup> ascribes to feminine vanity or motherly pride Mary's appearance at the marriage feast of Cana, as also her wish on a later occasion to speak to Jesus. Elsewhere he explains the necessity of the annunciation by the angel before Christ's conception by saying, that Mary had to be safeguarded against great alarm and anxiety, lest, as a sensitive virgin, she should do violence to herself that she might escape disgrace.<sup>40</sup> These are mere exegetical and oratorical excesses, as St. Thomas<sup>41</sup> plainly calls them. The explanation of them may be found partly in the free and desultory style of the saint and his love for paradoxes, partly too to the fact that he belonged to the school of Antioch and had Diodorus as his teacher.

Generally speaking, in spite of the excellence of her state of grace and sanctity, it would appear that Cyril as well as St. John Chrysostom find in Mary, as in a truly feminine being, certain weaknesses, as excusable as they are natural. Newman thinks this is due to the low opinion of womanhood which prevailed at that time, not only in the East, but also in the West.<sup>42</sup> It must, however,

<sup>37</sup> St. Ambrose, *In Lc.*, no. 132; *PL*, XV, 1837, and *Epist. 63 ad Vercell. eccl.*, no. 110; *PL*, XVI, 1218.

<sup>38</sup> Proclus (?), *Hom. 6; PG*, LXV, 740–48.

<sup>39</sup> St. John Chrysostom, *Hom. 21 in Joan.; PG*, LIX, 130; *Hom. 44 in Mt.; PG*, LVII, 464.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid., Hom. 4 in Mt.; PG*, LVII, 45.

<sup>41</sup> St. Thomas, IIIa, q. 27, a. 4 ad 3.

<sup>42</sup> Newman, *A letter to Pusey* (London, 1866), p. 136.

be remarked, that at that very time, at least in the Latin Fathers, especially in Sts. Ambrose and Augustine, the ideal character of a virgin (so significantly indicated in the Latin name of Virgo), and raised by moral virginity to manly strength, found expression in the most clear and decisive manner.

The texts from Sacred Scripture, to which these passages of the Fathers are related, and others even more so which are used by Protestants, especially the Centuriators,<sup>43</sup> to prove Mary's sinfulness, nowadays demand no further explanation. These are dealt with quite thoroughly by St. Peter Canisius and Vasquez.<sup>44</sup> Only this should be noted in Canisius that the Reformers, according to their own explanation, emphasized Mary's sinfulness so much, because in her they combatted the type and the guaranty of the sanctity and infallibility of the Church.

According to the teaching of the Church and the nature of the matter, the fact of Mary's sinlessness is based on a special and supernatural grace, or rather on an exceptional privilege of grace. For the reason that this grace made complete sinlessness possible, it was called "the gift of impeccancy" as in the first couple, and its main feature is freedom from concupiscence. In so far as it ensured effective freedom from sin, it was called, in relation to mortal sins, the "gift of confirmation in grace" or of "perfect perseverance"; in relation to venial sins,

<sup>43</sup> Centuriators of Magdeburg are a group of Protestant scholars who, under leadership of Math. Flacius, wrote a Church history, divided into *centuria* (centuries), under the title: *Ecclesiastica historia congesta per aliquot studiosos et pios viros in urbe Magdeburgica*, 13 volumes, Basel, 1559-74. The great Mariological tract of St. Peter Canisius was directed particularly against them.

<sup>44</sup> St. Peter Canisius, *De virg. Deip.*, lib. 4 *per totum*; Vasquez, in III, disp. 120, cap. 3 and 4.

the "gift of perfect confirmation in good." In this respect its main characteristic is the fullness of the graces of supernatural sanctification, actual as well as habitual, whereby God, who was with and in Mary in a special manner, so guarded her that she never committed a single sin.

The precise meaning of this grace and its manner of action are linked with the question, whether the confirmation in grace abolished not only the reality but also the possibility of sin, or the reality by the very impossibility, in the same way as the inclination to irregular motions of concupiscence, and thereby to formal sin, was eradicated by the extinction of the *fomes*.

As clear as it is that Mary is distinguished from God and Christ by the fact that, considered in her being, she was capable of sin, it is just as clear that, because of the divine protection and assistance which Mary enjoyed, it can and must be said in a certain sense that she could not have sinned, that in her, sin was impossible; hence her sinlessness includes the incapability of sinning. This, in a sense at least, is analogous to what, relative to the teaching authority of the Church, is said of the pope, that he cannot fail in certain acts and that his freedom from error includes infallibility.

In fact, Mary's incapability of sinning, as the pillar and vesture of her sanctity, is the original type and guarantee of the infallibility of the Church, like a pillar and vesture of truth. Just as the Church's truth rests on the words, "I am with you all days," so Mary's sanctity rests on "The Lord is with thee." Both are prophesied in a typical sense by the words: "The stream of the river maketh the city of God joyful: the most High hath sanc-

tified His own tabernacle. God is in the midst thereof, it shall not be moved.”<sup>45</sup>

Most theologians, in fact, all of them in relation to the period before Christ’s conception, do not admit the incapability of sinning in Mary as signifying that, by her confirmation in grace, she was rendered inwardly incapable of sin in a way analogous to Christ, for by that gift she would have lost the freedom to sin or the natural defectibility of her will. On the contrary, according to Alexander of Hales and St. Albert the Great,<sup>46</sup> this latter opinion was really maintained in reference to the period after Christ’s conception, and that by all the noted theologians of the thirteenth century, at least by St. Thomas, *Commentaries on the Sentences*.<sup>47</sup> From the point of view of personal sin, they advocated Mary’s perfect purity, after God, all the more forcefully, as they weakened her position in relation to original sin.

Later, probably also by St. Thomas himself in his later writings, this doctrine, insufficiently explained and in part also erroneously presented, was abandoned. In reference to the time after Christ’s conception, Mary’s incapability of sinning was explained simply by the standard of the gift of perseverance or confirmation in grace in other justified souls, as also by that of the gift of infallibility in the apostles and the pope.

The deep thought of the theologians from the thirteenth century should not, in our estimation, be relinquished so easily. Moreover, as to the time before Christ’s concep-

<sup>45</sup> Matt. 28:20; Luke 1:28; Ps. 45:5 f.

<sup>46</sup> Alexander of Hales, *Summa theol.*, pars 3, q. 9, membr. 3, a. 2, sec. 2 resol.; St. Albert the Great, *Mariale*, q. 134 and q. 163 (*privilegium 2*).

<sup>47</sup> St. Thomas, *in 3 Sent.*, d. 3, q. 1 a. 2, qla; see also Ia, q. 100, a. 2 corp. and IIIa, q. 27, a. 5 ad 2; cf. *De verit.*, q. 24, a. 9 corp. et ad 2.

tion, Mary's sinlessness can be formulated more profoundly and emphatically, if the grace of the motherhood is used in the meaning explained above, and if Mary's incapability of sinning is rather presented on the analogy of that of Christ's humanity. The sanction for this lies in the reasons advanced above,<sup>48</sup> especially in this, that the Fathers have no figure more forceful and graphic by which to illustrate the sinlessness of Christ's humanity than that with which the Sacred Scriptures portray the grace of he motherhood, viz., her clothing with the sun.

Unlike the gift of perseverance or confirmation in grace, which was granted to other saints, the grace of Mary's motherhood lays the foundations of a perfect sinlessness, and does so in an entirely different and more sublime manner. The divine influence, safeguarding her against all sin, rests not merely on an actual decree, nor on a promise of God or an arrangement of plan made because of certain outward aims (e.g., in order to equip the apostles as worthy foundation stones of the Church), which would require this exclusion of sin. It rested rather on the very singular and personal relation of Mary to God which makes her the bride and the vesture of God. Because of this relation, God owed it to His own dignity and holiness to safeguard Mary against sin, lest her sin should be imputed to Him, or lest it should appear that He had a share in it. Because of this relation also, all graces necessary to preclude sin are virtually ensured and guaranteed to Mary in and through the principle of this grace.

Again because of this relation, Mary is completely taken up in God, enveloped and filled by Him, on the

<sup>48</sup> See *supra*, chap. 2.

analogy of the grace of union and in the sense of the figure of the "Woman clothed with the sun." Therefore, this incapability of sinning should not be conceived, as in other cases, as an incapability coming to the subject from without, but as an inherent incapability, founded on the inward character of the subject. Compared with the confirmation in grace in the apostles, this is befitting also to Mary's relation to the Church; Mary appears both as the foundation stone and as the root and heart of the Church.

On the other hand, a real difference in form exists also between Mary's incapability of sinning, based on the grace of her motherhood, and the infallibility of the teaching authority of the Church. First, the divine influence in the teaching authority of the Church is not connected with the person and his personal relation to God, but with the authority and its exercise. Secondly, in the teaching authority of the Church this influence in itself appears only as guidance and assistance. To Mary it was granted naturally by pervading and penetrating her whole being with the stream of the grace of sanctification and enlightenment.

Considered abstractly and in itself, the fullness of created grace can effect in Mary's will only a moral incapability of sinning, analogous to that which can exist also in other saints with regard to mortal sin. But considered concretely, in its unity with the grace of her motherhood as its root and soul and as its fruit and instrument, that fullness of grace forms the basis of a perfect incapability of sinning even before the conception of Christ.

After Christ's conception and as a result of the grace of her motherhood completed by that conception, Mary's incapability of sinning attains an essentially higher character in relation to the interior condition of the powers of her soul. It is at least not exhausted by the ordinary ideas of her moral incapability of sinning, and in a certain sense it effects a physical incapability of sinning. For, since natural motherhood in itself works such a wonderful change in a mother, that all her thoughts and desires are given a new direction and her the life is, so to say, bound up in that of the child, this divine motherhood, in which nature and grace unite, in which the Son is at the same time Bridegroom, Father, and Creator of His Mother, in which, therefore, all ties of the strongest love, natural and divine, bind Mary to God, this divine motherhood, we repeat, should all the more change Mary's whole interior life, so that she, in a still higher sense than the Apostle, can say: "I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me."

From this point of view the grace of motherhood acts in a manner similar to the light of glory, so far as the latter allows no other good, apart from God, to appear as desirable except in God. It acts similarly also to the grace of union in Christ, which takes away from His humanity its natural independence and constrains it to love itself only in the person of the Logos. Thus Mary's incapability of sinning, especially from the time of Christ's conception, appears as the luster and reflection of Christ's own incapability of sinning. And although in Mary this quality is infinitely below that of Christ, nevertheless it resembles His, in the fact that hers too must be considered as a complete and interior incapability of sinning.

**THE PRIVILEGES OF MARY'S FREEDOM FROM SIN**

As a consequent, or also as a supplement, to what has been said concerning Mary's sinlessness, the following points should be elucidated.

First, in Mary, even during her earthly life, and in Mary alone of all mankind, could there be found that complete immunity from sin and that perfection of justice which is realized in other members of the Church only after death or after the resurrection. On earth it can be pursued merely as an ultimate aim to be achieved only later.

Likewise, from the beginning of her existence here below, Mary possessed in her earthly body the same perfection of purity and justice, as that of which the angels are capable on account of their purely spiritual nature.

Further, because the inward grace that shielded her from all sin was higher than that of the angels, and also because the grace of her motherhood made sin utterly impossible, Mary possessed a higher degree of purity from sin than did the angels. Together with the possibility of a higher grace, the first reason admits the possibility of a still greater safeguarding against sin. As to the second, that of the motherhood, Mary possessed the highest degree or rather the highest form of purity from sin, conceivable in a mere creature.

If by purity we understand not formally an exemption from sin, but positively the purity, the divine clarity and simplicity of the spiritual life, then the highest conceivable purity is not realized in Mary. For in that sense the highest purity coincides with the highest conceivable degree of grace and likeness to God. However, as a re-

sult of what has been said, it may be seen that Mary possessed, in this sense also, a higher purity than was ever granted to any creature whatever.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>49</sup> Concerning Mary's high degree of purity, see particularly St. Albert the Great, *Mariale*, q. 137 ff., a series of beautiful and profound thoughts which are not completely worked out.

## CHAPTER VII

### Mary's Exemption from the Bonds of Death<sup>1</sup>

IN OUR time the question relating to Mary's assumption into heaven has gained importance by the fact that, at the Vatican Council, many bishops requested to have Mary's bodily assumption into heaven declared a dogma.<sup>2</sup> With that the question entered a new stage of theological discussion. Not that it is already as good as defined; but this request of itself demands not only a more careful study of the grounds for the possibility of such a definition, but it also points out, in its motivation, such grounds as up to the present have been given little attention, grounds which run counter to the one-sided and altogether erroneous conception often held of the state of the question.

<sup>1</sup> For literature see Pseudo-Augustine, *De assumptione B.M.V.*; the festal sermons of Andrew of Crete, Germanus of Constantinople, St. John Damascene, etc.; of St. Peter Damian, Hildebert of Le Mans, Peter de La Celle, and Amadaeus of Lausanne; of St. Bernardine of Siena, St. Thomas of Villanova and later Bossuet; St. Albert the Great, *Mariale*, q. 131 f.; Engelbert of Admont, *De gratiis et virtutibus B.V.M.* (in Pez, *Anecdota*, I, 1), p. 4, cap. 18 ff.; St. Peter Canisius, *De Virg. Deip.*, V, 5; in the seventeenth century against the *critici*, several *opuscula* of Jacques Gaudin and Nicolas Billard (Ladvocat), about which in Hurter, *Nomenclator Litterarius*, 3rd edition, IV, 454 f.; Benedict XIV, *De festis B.V.*, cap. 8; Trombelli, *Mariae ss. Vita ac gesta*, diss. 44 et 45; Passaglia *De imm. conc.*, sec. 6, cap. 6, art. 1; and a very important work of Lana (Rome, 1880).

<sup>2</sup> See C. Martin, *Concili Vaticani documentorum collectio* (Paderborn, 1873), pp. 106–15, and *Acta et decreta ss. conciliorum recens. Collectio Lacensis*, VII (Freiburg, 1890), 868–72.

**POSITIVE AND HISTORICAL DISCUSSION OF THE SUBJECT**

It is true, the manner in which this doctrine was usually considered by the learned and the unlearned was anything but suited to make it appear as an object of dogmatic definition, or even as an object of dogmatic interest and an organic element in the dogmatic system. The fact of Mary's bodily assumption into heaven was pictured much in the same way as the analogous legend of St. John the Evangelist with which it was often connected. Hence, it was related as a visible, historical fact, originally perceived with the eyes or deduced from observation, and propagated by historical tradition based on the fact that relics of Mary were lacking and her tomb was empty. In contrast to the analogous legend about St. John the Evangelist, here it was added, that the fact was originally recorded and handed down by the apostles themselves. Next, the propagation of this assertion was supported by higher considerations of propriety urging its veracity, and the doctrine, thus originated and maintained, had gained an ever wider diffusion and liturgical establishment in the Church.

But obviously no theological and dogmatic certainty can be obtained in that way. In the most favorable circumstance an ecclesiastical certainty might be reached; but even so, it would rest on a weak foundation. For, if the reasons of propriety here advanced do not necessarily coordinate the doctrine and the dogma, they of themselves could give no certainty, nor could they any longer support the tradition of the event. In the present case, the tradition certainly needs that support, for positive witnesses emerge so late and under such circumstances,

that they only meagerly, if at all, can guarantee a trustworthy tradition which must have formerly existed and can be traced to the fact itself.

The uncertainty of the historical tradition as such is evident from the following. First, before the end of the sixth or at best of the fifth century no completely certain and positive witness for the fact of Mary's bodily assumption can be authentically brought forward. Further, in the fourth century Epiphanius, who was close to the scene of events and had devoted himself seriously to the study of Mary's death, has apparently no knowledge of even the existence of a tradition concerning the end of Mary's life.<sup>3</sup> Finally, those Fathers who occupied themselves with the question in the seventh and eighth centuries cannot bring forward a witness of more ancient times, who is absolutely positive about the fact. St. Modestus of Jerusalem (632) whose first sermon, given on the feast of the Dormitio (Mary's departure from this life), still exists, expressly complains of the lack of witnesses for the glorious death of the Mother of God.<sup>4</sup>

The most ancient, so-called historical testimony in the *Chronikon* of Eusebius reads: "The Virgin Mary, Mother of Christ, is assumed into heaven unto her Son, as some wrote to whom the fact was revealed."<sup>5</sup> This testimony, on the main point, is not sufficiently definite, nor is it tenable from a critical point of view. It is nowhere else quoted by the Fathers. Likewise unauthenticated is a homily of St. Athanasius, cited for the first time by Gly-

<sup>3</sup> St. Epiphanius, *Panarion*, Haer. 78, nos. 11 and 24; Haer. 79, no. 5; PG, XLII, 716, 737, 748.

<sup>4</sup> St. Modestus of Jerusalem, *Encomium in B.V.*; PG, LXXXVI, 3280.

<sup>5</sup> See Baronius, *Annales, ad annum 48*, edited in Cologne, I (1609), 403; this apocryphal fragment is quoted by Lana.

cas<sup>6</sup> (eleventh century). A homily of St. Cyril of Alexandria, advanced by the moderns, especially Trombelli, belongs to the schismatic patriarch of Constantinople, Cyril Lucaris (seventeenth century), who was for some time patriarch of Alexandria.<sup>7</sup>

After St. Modestus (seventh century), the Greek Fathers appeal especially to a text from Pseudo-Dionysius. It states casually that besides Hierotheus and Timothy, Dionysius came together with the apostles to view "the body of the one who is the beginning of life and the recipient of God"; all those who were gathered together, praised the power of God revealing itself in the humility of the incarnation.<sup>8</sup> The author, at the earliest, wrote in the fourth century;<sup>9</sup> but apart from that, this text, much as it is quoted to indicate the presence of the apostles at Mary's death, makes no reference to Mary's resurrection and assumption.

In general the text, when applied to Mary's body, has almost no meaning, and the conscientious commentator, St. Maximus,<sup>10</sup> merely advances the opinion, that perhaps Mary's body is meant. It is more probable that the Greek word *σώμα* is a corruption of *σῆμα*, which means monument or sepuchral monument, and in that case, the text should necessarily be connected with the tomb of our Lord, not

<sup>6</sup> Michael Glycas, *Annales*; PG, CLVIII, 184, 240.

<sup>7</sup> Trombelli, *op. cit.*, in Bourasse, *Summa aurea*, II, 289 f.

<sup>8</sup> Τοῦ ἡωρχικοῦ καὶ θεοδόχου σώματος, Pseudo-Dionysius, *De divinis nominibus*, cap. 3; PG, III, 681;

τοῦ σώματος = of the body

*σῆμα* or *μνήμα* = *μνήματος* = of the monument, tomb.

<sup>9</sup> It is now settled that the writings of Pseudo-Dionysius, which appeared only in 533 and in which the works of the Neoplatonic Proclus (d. 485) are used, did not exist before the beginning of the sixth century.

<sup>10</sup> St. Maximus the Confessor, *Scholia in Dion, Areop.*; PG, IV, 236: Εωρχικόν καὶ θεοδόχον σῶμα τάχα τό τῆς ἀγίας θεοτόκου λέγει, τότε κοιμηθείσης.

with that of Mary. It is not unlikely that the corruption was purposely made by a Nestorian, in order to smuggle in his heresy, which for Mary used *Theodochos* (recipient of God) instead of *Theotokos* (Mother of God).<sup>11</sup> In a sermon St. John Damascene<sup>12</sup> and, at a much later period (fourteenth century), the historian Nicephorus<sup>13</sup> make mention of an account taken from a *Historia Euthymiana*, which is unknown, and of which neither the date nor the author can be ascertained. This account was in reference to a conversation concerning Mary's tomb, between Empress Pulcheria and the Patriarch Juvenal of Jerusalem, who was present at the Council of Chalcedon. Briefly Juvenal relates the wonderful events at Mary's death as founded on "an ancient and trustworthy tradition," and appeals to the previously mentioned text in Pseudo-Areopagite to prove that the apostles were present.

However, it is not even certain, in fact, it seems most

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Pitra, *Spicilegium Solemnense*, I (Paris, 1845), 499. See also Tillemont, *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire ecclésiastique des six premiers siècles*, I (Brussels, 1706), *notes sur la S. Vierge*, 14, p. 289, and M. Jugie, "La mort et l'assomption de la S. Vierge dans la tradition des cinq premiers siècles," in *Echos d'Orient*, XXV (1926), 305 f. about the latter work of Ferd. Cavallera, "A propos d'une enquête patristique sur l'Assomption," in *Bull. de litt. eccl.*, XXVII (1926), 97–116.

<sup>12</sup> St. John Damascene, *Or. in dormit. B.M.*, no. 18; PG, XCVI, 748–52; taken up in the *Breviarium Romanum*, die quarta infra octavam assumptionis, 2nd Noct., leaving out the word *verissima* in the introductory sentence: *ex antiqua et verissima accepimus traditione*. The quotation from *Historia Euthymiana*, lib. 3, cap. 40, in Damascene's sermon is certainly an interpolation. The *Hist. Euth.* itself, probably not written before the end of the ninth century, has no historical value. Thus Jugie, "Le récit de l'histoire euthymiaque sur la mort et l'assomption de la Vierge," in *Echos d'Orient*, XXV (1926), 385–92.

<sup>13</sup> Nicephorus Callistos, *Hist. eccles.*, XV, 14; PG, CXLVII, 44. Without giving his sources, the same author quotes (in XIV, 47; PG, CXLVI, 1221) a passage from the *Hist. Euth.*, which appears also in Nicon the Armenian (d. 998); see Jugie, *op. cit.*, p. 389.

unlikely, that this text from the *Historia Euthymiacarum* was inserted in his sermon by St. John Damascene himself. It is found between two strongly poetic and oratorical texts, the second of which follows the account, when logically and oratorically it should follow immediately upon the first. For that reason the item appears almost evidently to have been inserted later, the more so as it is not quoted by other Fathers and official speakers before Nicephorus. Hence it is very doubtful whether St. John Damascene would have thought just of this testimony when he speaks of the existing tradition about the circumstances surrounding Mary's death.<sup>14</sup> The story is further discredited by inherent improbabilities, e.g., that the clothes of the Blessed Virgin were still in the tomb. As to the removal of these clothes to the basilica built by Pulcheria, other versions of the tale exist.

As for written sources, those known to be extant before the end of the sixth century comprise: a document ascribed to St. John the Evangelist, and the *Liber de transitu, id est assumptio S. Mariae*, which was declared apocryphal by Pope Gelasius<sup>15</sup> as early as 494. The latter was in circulation, now under the name of Melito of Sardis, again under that of a Melitho or Mellitus of Sardis or Laodicea, and was spread East and West in various versions as early as that time. Apart from the many peculiarities in some versions, the book is at times openly in contradiction to the Acts of the Apostles, as Bede pointed out.<sup>16</sup> It may

<sup>14</sup> St. John Damascene, *op. cit.*, no. 4; PG, XCVI, 729.

<sup>15</sup> PL, LIX, 177. It is certain that the *Decretum Gelasianum* is not from Pope Gelasius. It was compiled by an unknown author, probably in the sixth century. However, it was confirmed by Pope Leo IX and taken up in Gratian's *Corpus juris*.

<sup>16</sup> St. Bede, *Retr. in Act. Ap.*, cap. 8; PL, XCII, 1014.

even be suspected that the book had connection with the legend referred to above, relative to the death and resurrection of St. John the Evangelist, which Epiphanius also mentions,<sup>17</sup> and that this legend was adapted to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The fact that this rich and fantastically embellished legend found such wide circulation as early as the fifth century, can perhaps be explained in this way. After the Council of Ephesus the attention of the faithful was directed especially to the Mother of God, and for that very reason the feast of "the passing away" or of "the assumption" was introduced at that time, as the first which related directly to the person of Our Blessed Lady. Perhaps these two facts, as cause or effect, had a bearing on the fact that at that time, apparently, Mary's tomb was discovered in Jerusalem. This tomb was unknown to Sts. Epiphanius, Jerome, and Leo I.

The existence and diffusion of this book indicate in any case, that the substance of the fact did not appear to the consciousness of the faithful as something strange, but as something miraculous. The suspicion is not excluded that the book was closely allied to one or another of the existing and more succinct historical traditions; but this is altogether insufficient to prove the existence of such a tradition. The Greek Fathers who do not explicitly quote the book, notably St. John Damascene,<sup>18</sup> accepted indeed the existence of a tradition apart from that and to that extent considered it conclusive, as we see in the narrative ascribed to Juvenal. However, it remains always a matter of doubt, whether before the sixth and seventh centuries

<sup>17</sup> St. Epiphanius, *Panarion*, Haer. 79; PG, XLII, 748.

<sup>18</sup> See *supra*, note 14.

this tradition in some way developed out of the critically chosen selections from the book *de transitu*, or from a still simpler and more ancient form of legendary fabrication.

This remark applies also to the first, and long the only, historical testimony in the West, namely, that of St. Gregory of Tours (596), which outlines the gist of the legend in a few brief words.<sup>19</sup> It is said that Gregory instead might have had his information through his relations with the East, especially with Jerusalem. But even he speaks of the main circumstances more definitely and decisively than do the later testimonies from Jerusalem. He mentions one circumstance which cannot be found among the testimonies alluded to, viz., the visible appearance of the Savior leading Mary into heaven.

As may be concluded from the sermons of Sts. Modestus and Andrew of Crete<sup>20</sup> (the first documents of the seventh century are derived from these) the historical tradition as such was in general neither definite nor certain in Jerusalem. It strikes one as particularly strange, that both appeal exclusively to St. Paul and to Mary's empty tomb as actual proof of the matter, and that with more emphasis than the arguments warrant. The tomb itself is of no help, if for no other reason than that it was discovered at a late date. Moreover, a purely local tradition of a historical event in apostolic times, even when the local tradition was guaranteed more firmly than the event, would not suffice to prove that this fact as such belongs to the apostolic deposit. The local character of the tradition would scarcely agree with the fact that all the

<sup>19</sup> St. Gregory of Tours, *Miraculorum lib. 1, de gloria martyrum*, c. 4; *PL*, LXXI, 708.

<sup>20</sup> St. Modestus of Jerusalem, *Encom. in B.V.*, *PL*, LXXXVI, 3277–3312; St. Andrew of Crete, *Orationes tres in dormit.*, *PG*, XCVII, 1045–1110.

apostles were present at Mary's death, as this tradition maintains in all its forms.

In this state of affairs the building up of a specific historical tradition going back to the time of the apostles is a disagreeable task, because impossible of achievement, and it is more detrimental than helpful to the interests of the theological truth of Mary's assumption into heaven. We cannot bridge the gap of the first six centuries, not even if we accept the opinion that this point of doctrine was hidden, as a result of the *disciplina arcani*, through fear that the glorification of Mary, which accompanied her assumption, might give occasion to the heathens and weak Christians to look upon her as a goddess. For, apart from the fact that the danger on that point was scarcely greater than that which might arise from the name and concept of "Mother of God," still the *disciplina arcani* could not have gone so far as to keep the point in question out of sermons and writings of all sorts.<sup>21</sup> And when, as is the case, such silence on this matter was maintained, that even Epiphanius was in ignorance of it, and that, as early as the seventh century, absolutely no positive and more ancient testimonies could be found, then the very *disciplina arcani* would have completely severed all threads of tradition.

For lack of more ancient testimony, the existence of an

<sup>21</sup> For the reasons given, we do not wish to deny a certain reserve on the part of the Church, far less a divine arrangement, to which also Epiphanius points. Rather we find it fitting when, in some private revelations (e.g., to St. Bridget, *Revelationes*, lib. 6, cap. 61; edited in Rome, 1606, p. 569), it is said that God allowed the history regarding the end of Mary's life to be propagated only by uncertain legends, so that Christ's true incarnation should not be eclipsed by Mary's heavenly glory, and Mary herself should be considered as a divine being. But in that case God Himself did not allow a historical tradition as foundation for a later acknowledgment of Mary's glory.

implicit tradition, such as is accepted for articles of faith, is possible only when the disputed fact is based, not only on positive report, but is also considered as being contained in other facts or articles of doctrine.

In any case, only then can theological discussion of the question be of advantage, not only when the pure substance of the fact is separated from the circumstances surrounding it in the legendary tradition, but also when the abstraction is being made to find out whether, apart from the Sacred Scriptures and the traditional idea of the virginal Mother of God, a positive and explicit apostolical tradition still exists concerning the substance of the fact, and whether consequently this fact is treated in the same manner as similar related facts, viz., the immaculate conception, and the permanent sinlessness of Mary. Indeed, all doubts about this fact originated through this, that the matter was viewed from a false standpoint, as if, in order to ascertain its certainty, it must be established by ecclesiastically guaranteed and historical means, or by a "Catholic history," as Pseudo-Augustine expressed himself.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Pseudo-Augustine (Ambrosius Autpertus), *serm. 208 in assumpt.*, in *App. ad serm. s. Aug.; PL, XXXIX, 2130.*

## CHAPTER VIII

# Mary's Exemption from the Bonds of Death

### THEOLOGICAL DISCUSSION<sup>1</sup>

FROM a theological point of view, the actual questions concerning the end of Mary's life are summarized under this question: How far was Mary, in her bodily life, subject to the lot of ordinary mortals, or rather, how far, in view of her spiritual life and the life of her soul, did she share in the privileges of Christ? This question apparently must be solved first at least, if not exclusively, according to the biblical and traditional idea of Mary's worthiness and dignity. The idea contains, not remote and vague indications only, but also proximate, definite, and decisive suggestions concerning the privileges in question. These privileges, especially in connection with the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, have apparently grown daily more distinct and forceful to the mind of the Church.

These privileges can be reduced to this: that, as the "indestructible temple and inextinguishable lamp," as St. Cyril of Alexandria<sup>2</sup> called her at Ephesus, Mary, according to the *Sacramentarium Gregorianum*, unlike the rest of mankind, was not subject to the dominion or the

<sup>1</sup> This idea is formulated in chap. 1 *supra*.

<sup>2</sup> St. Cyril of Alexandria, *Homil.* 4; *PG*, LVII, 992.

bonds of death.<sup>3</sup> This exemption from the bondage of death is threefold: (1) In regard to the necessity of undergoing death, or even in regard to its cause and form, and also to its meaning; (2) In regard to the natural consequences of death, viz., the decomposition of the body which may be considered as the final completion of death, and to which special significance is attached in its being imposed as a punishment for sin; (3) In regard to the duration of death to the end of time or to the general resurrection.

Usually the second and third points were treated as a whole, for they are closely related to each other. But all too often the second point was thus given a position that obscured instead of illuminating the third. The second point was predominantly taken as a historical fact and not as a theological truth.

#### MARY'S EXEMPTION FROM THE DOMINION OF DEATH

According to the constant and general acceptance of the Church, the first point, that Mary really died, is an established fact.<sup>4</sup> It cannot be said that Mary's death is as certain as, let alone more certain than, the glorification of her body and soul; nor as a matter of fact is this certainty considered essential or necessary. For, theologically, Mary's glorification follows most definitely from revelation, while her death can be established only by at best an indisputable presumption. At least, it cannot be

<sup>3</sup> *Imperium seu nexus mortis* it is called in the prayer *Veneranda*, which prayer concludes the procession preceding the Mass of the Assumption. Nowadays it appears in the Assumption liturgy of the Premonstratensians and of the Dominicans; *PL*, LXXVIII, 133.

<sup>4</sup> Concerning Mary's death see especially Suarez and Trombelli, *op. cit.* Dominicus Arnaldi (*Super transitu B.M.V. Deiparae*, Genoa, 1879) tried in vain to question this fact.

immediately deduced from the general law of death, since this is not formally and directly applicable to her.

By reason of her freedom from all sin, especially her complete immunity from original sin, Mary was in fact not subject to death as a penal debt, and consequently she was exempted from this law binding on the rest of mankind. Neither can it be said that she was subject to death because of her mortal nature; for nature makes death inevitable only in so far as the person to whom it belongs has no supernatural claim to the eternal continuation of that nature. Now, such a claim could certainly be based on the grace of the divine motherhood, if Mary had not specifically become thereby the Mother of the Redeemer, and if, in the economy of the redemption, the death of the Redeemer did not require her death: not indeed as a second expiatory death, but in order that thus the Mother should not appear greater than the Son, and especially that by her death she might prove the reality of her own human nature and that of her Son.

If Mary's death must be formally classified under a law which is absolutely universal and knows no exception, that law should be formulated so, that after the Fall the final perfection of mankind must be reached only by the cessation of bodily life. This law, however, has no more to do with death's dominion over Mary, than the economy of the redemption to which the law owes its universality; and hence it does not affect Mary's exemption from the dominion of death.

In Mary as in Christ, this exemption from death was joined to freedom from bodily sickness and, therefore, from death through sickness. On the other hand, no conformity with Christ in His violent death was required.

For, Mary's death was to be neither an expiatory death nor a death of punishment. Moreover, under the cross she had been a sharer in the sufferings of Christ's death. For the same reasons Mary's death was neither painful nor sorrowful.

However, according to a genuinely theological and universal opinion dating from the Middle Ages, the nature of Mary's death resembles that of Christ in this, that Mary voluntarily accepted the unmerited death out of humble and loving obedience, and without doubt actually died of love. That is to say, her death came in the form of a dissolution resulting from the supernatural power of divine love, as a consuming of the natural vital strength by the languishing of her love, or by the violence of an ecstasy of love which separated the soul from the body, or because by her love Mary prevailed upon God not to maintain her bodily life any longer. Hence, Mary's death appears as a holocaust of love. The sacrifice, made under the cross in the greatest spiritual sorrow, was thereby outwardly completed in a sweet and loving manner as in a slumber of love, and therein lies the ideal of that holy and blessed death "in the kiss of the Lord," which the death, the "wages of sin," will in some degree resemble, in the souls justified by Christ's graces of redemption.

Epiphanius, the first to speak definitely about the end of Mary's life, declared that it is not known what death Mary died, and whether in truth she really did die. On the occasion of the controversy against the Antidicomarianites, the opponents of Mary's virginity, he makes a digression on the "introduced women," which some tried to justify by the example of the Blessed Virgin. He there

says: "The Sacred Scriptures do not say that Mary remained in the house of St. John, and the probable reason for the silence of Holy Writ concerning Mary's later life may be found in the fact that her life was so completely heavenly and wonderful, that mankind could not possibly have borne the spectacle. Perhaps the Apocalypse<sup>5</sup> would show by the woman who was snatched from the dragon, that Mary escaped death. If she did die, her death was kept hidden, that people might not think too carnally about Mary."<sup>6</sup>

Against the Collyridians, who made Mary a goddess, he insisted that her death, in any case honorable, was certainly possible. Even if she did not die, she was not to be honored as a goddess any more than other saints who died.<sup>7</sup> Then he develops the following thoughts: "According to her nature, Mary remains human and feminine. Hence, like other saints, she is unsuited for adoration, although as an elect vessel, according to her soul and body, she is glorified in a higher degree than others. In like manner, neither Elias, although taken up into heaven without dying, nor John the Evangelist, who died in a miraculous manner,<sup>8</sup> nor Thecla, who remained untouched in the fire, may be adored."<sup>9</sup>

Because, like the Sacred Scriptures, the most ancient tradition failed to make a positive pronouncement on Mary's death, the mind of the Church can and must pronounce in its favor on account of the economy of re-

<sup>5</sup> Apoc., 12:13 f.

<sup>6</sup> St. Epiphanius, *Panarion*, Haer. 78, no. 11; PG, XLII, 716.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, nos. 23 and 24; PG, XLII, 736.

<sup>8</sup> With this Epiphanius means, indeed, that sort of death which St. Augustine, *tract.* 124 in Joan. (*PL*, XXXV, 1970) brings forward as reported by certain apocrypha.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, Haer. 79, no. 5; PG, XLII, 747.

demption. Against this firm, decisive and universal mind and consciousness of the Church, Dominicus Arnaldi was wrong in attempting, in a voluminous work,<sup>10</sup> to overthrow the thesis of Mary's death. At most it can be said that this thesis does not follow so evidently and conclusively from an article of faith, as that it could become or is "of faith." The fact may be cited that, even in regard to the rest of mankind, the general law of death does not bind so peremptorily that exceptions would have to be called inconsistent with faith, e.g., Enoch and Elias, and also those who will be living at the end of the world.<sup>11</sup>

In Epiphanius the doubt as to the fact of death arises from the certainty that Mary did not fall under the common "debt of death." The later Greek Fathers emphasize this certainty even more emphatically. As in the case of Christ, they represent Mary's death as something astonishing. They signify their surprise that she, who was free from all laws of sin and punishment due to sin, who brought forth the life of all and was the indestructible temple of the Godhead, should herself suffer death.<sup>12</sup> And in consequence, when they trace Mary's death to the universal and divine law, they expressly point out, that this law applied to Mary in a manner different from its application to ordinary mortals.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Dominicus Arnaldi, *Super transitu B.M.V. Deiparae*, Genoa, 1879.

<sup>11</sup> Concerning Enoch (Gen. 5:28) and Elias (IV Kings, 2:1-14) see St. Thomas, Ia, q. 102, a.2 ad 3; IIIa, q.49, a.5 ad 2. Concerning the last human beings, Ia IIae, q.81, a.3 ad 1.

<sup>12</sup> See Passaglia, *op. cit.*, nos. 1483 ff.

<sup>13</sup> Thus, e.g., one of the most ancient Fathers, St. Andrew of Crete, *Or. 1 in Dormit.*, PG, XCVII, 1052, wrote: *Quippe ut quod est vere fateamur, et ad hanc usque progressa est mors hominum naturalis, non tamquam velut carcere cohiberit, sicut in nobis accidit, vel sibi subjicerit, nisi quantum oportuit, ut somnum illum seu exstaticum quendam, ut ita dicam, impetum*

In the Latin Fathers, Mary's death was certainly conceived more as a direct result of sin. For example, St. Augustine writes: "Mary, daughter of Adam, died because of sin, Adam died because of sin, and the flesh of the Lord, taken from Mary, died in order to destroy sin." <sup>14</sup> In the Middle Ages it was Mary's actual death, as an inherited effect of sin, which was held up as proof against her original immunity from original sin. The concept followed this line of reasoning: Mary's death, like that of Christ, would certainly not have taken place had she not been connected with the sinful race; her exemption from the penal debt of death was based on the grace of redemption and her union with the Redeemer; this very union justified the debt of death in another and an honorable sense. Pius V dealt with the overemphasis on the punitive character of Mary's death by condemning the 73rd thesis of Baius. This thesis reads: "Apart from Christ, no one is born without original sin; hence the Blessed Virgin died because of the sin which she contracted from Adam, and all her afflictions in this life, like those of other saints, are the punishment of original and actual sin." <sup>15</sup>

The idea that Mary, like Christ, died a violent death

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*expireretur, quo a terrenis ad bona illa in spe proposita in deiformem quandam statum immutati transmittimur—ac qualis e.g. fuit primus ille somnus quem dormivit homo, quum costa ad complendam speciem privaretur et supplementum ablatae partis reciperet. In hunc arbitror modum soporata et ipsa quidem gustavit mortem, haud tamen detenta mansit, nisi ut naturae cederet legibus ac dispensationem impleret, quam ab initio providentia omnia peradens hominum generi fixit immotum. Quum enim secundum divinum oraculum non sit homo qui vivat et non visurus sit mortem, erat autem homo et etiam homine potior, quam celebramus, plane utique probatum est, et ipsam eandem nobiscum naturae legem explesse, licet non eodem modo nobiscum, sed super nos et super eam causam, per quam nos hoc penitus pati cogimur. Cf. St. John Damascene, Or. 2 de dormit., no. 2 at the end; PG, XCVI, 725–28.*

<sup>14</sup> St. Augustine, in *Ps. 34 serm. 2, n.3; PL, XXXVI, 335.*

<sup>15</sup> Denz., no. 1073.

was advanced from of old through an erroneous explanation of the words, "a sword shall pierce thy own soul," in Simeon's prophecy. The Fathers always rejected it. St. Ambrose wrote: "neither does the text of Holy Writ nor does history teach that Mary left this life through the sufferings of physical violence; for not the soul, but the body is pierced by a material sword."<sup>16</sup>

The painlessness of Mary's death was already taught by St. John Damascene: "neither her birth nor her death suffered pain,"<sup>17</sup> whereas St. Peter Damian holds that, like the Savior Himself on the Mount of Olives, Mary, too, may have experienced the agony of death.<sup>18</sup> St. Albert the Great deals with this matter in a profound and beautiful manner. He contends that, since Mary beneath the cross had suffered the piercing of her soul by the sword, that is, tasted the full agony of death, she was not allowed to be exposed a second time to like anguish.<sup>19</sup>

The death of love without physical illness, which St. Albert<sup>20</sup> also decidedly stresses, can be conceived in various ways, as indicated above. This thought is brought out most beautifully by Bossuet<sup>21</sup> in his sermon on Mary's assumption into heaven.

All circumstances considered, Mary's death in an eminent degree bears that character which, in Christian phraseology, marks the death of the just as a "falling asleep." Death, in this sense, is not the mere destruction of life, but a temporary retreat from bodily life, whereby

<sup>16</sup> St. Ambrose, *in Luc.*, lib. 2, n. 61; *PL*, XV, 1574.

<sup>17</sup> St. John Damascene, *op. cit.*, *PG*, XCVI, 728.

<sup>18</sup> St. Peter Damian, *De celebrandis vigiliis*, cap. 1; *PL*, CXLV, 801.

<sup>19</sup> St. Albert the Great, *Mariale*, q. 131 (*in contrarium*).

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, q. 132 (*solutio*).

<sup>21</sup> Bossuet, *Oeuvres oratoires* (edited by Labarq), IV, pp. 411-427; cf. III, pp. 481-99.

the way to eternal rest is made ready for the spirit and a resurrection to a better life is prepared for the body. Hence, in contrast to natural death, the Fathers <sup>22</sup> call Mary's death "a life-giving death," whereas they call Christ's death "vivifying." These names point to still another element which, in the present case, is expressed by the word "falling asleep." Mary's death was not followed by the natural consequences of death; her body did not fall a prey to decomposition, but remained intact in order to be immediately reunited with her soul.

#### MARY'S EXEMPTION FROM DECOMPOSITION

Just as Mary's death was not due to the dominion of death but belonged entirely to the order of grace, so also is Mary's freedom from that dominion revealed still more clearly by the fact that, after death, her body did not fall a prey to the natural consequences of death, but escaped the fate of corruption, which had been especially designated by God as the penalty of sin.

Death is an evil which of itself contains nothing undignified, but can, under circumstances, be honorable and victorious. Decomposition, however, is quite another thing. It is a real degradation which under no circumstance whatever is honorable or triumphant, but is always shameful; even in the case of the just it appears as a remnant of the curse of sin. For that reason this evil belongs to that class of human defects which, for reasons analogous to those in Christ, are absolutely excluded from Mary also, as being inconsistent with her dignity and

<sup>22</sup> E.g., St. John Damascene, *Or. 2 de dormit.*, no. 2; PG, XCVI, 725; John of Euboea, *Sermo in conc. s. Deip.*, no. 22; PG, XCVI, 1497; Ballerini, *Sylloge*, I, 101.

position and especially with the consecration of her whole being by its intimate union with Christ as spouse and Mother. Hence the words from the psalm: "Nor wilt thou give Thy holy one to see corruption,"<sup>23</sup> must of necessity be extended to Mary also.

In Mary herself, incorruption, which prevents decomposition, corresponds to the threefold incorruption of her perfect virginity. (1) the exclusion of any contamination whatever with the flesh of another in the conception of her Son; (2) the exclusion of any violation whatever of her womb by the birth; (3) the freedom (perfected by Christ's conception) from the *fomes* of sin, because of which the body of any other mortal is called by the Apostle<sup>24</sup> a "body of death" and a "body of sin." Almost all the reasons in favor of this threefold form of her virginal incorruption hold also for her exemption from decomposition.<sup>25</sup> With the latter the third form is connected even directly, since it presents Mary's flesh as a flesh divinely and spiritually glorified. In like manner, the acknowledged biblical figures of the incorruption of the virgin, e.g., the ark of the covenant made from imperishable wood, Solomon's throne of ivory, are no less applicable to the imperishableness of her body.

On the contrary, no single reason can be adduced why decomposition should be fitting or admissible. If her relation to the rest of mankind is urged, this is outweighed by her special union with Christ which in this, as in many other points, requires a likeness to Himself. But even apart from that, Mary's complete freedom from sin would

<sup>23</sup> Ps. 15:10; cf. Acts 2:27; 13:35.

<sup>24</sup> Rom. 7:24; 6:6.

<sup>25</sup> See I, 68 ff., of this work; also I, 102 ff.; and *supra*, chap. 6.

dispense her from the universal fate of corruption affecting the rest of mankind. Moreover, if this freedom from sin rests on the redemption by Christ, surely, it would be contrary to the dignity of the Redeemer and the entire economy of redemption, if her body, after being the seat and instrument of the principle of liberation from all corruption and the means of its union with all other redeemed souls, itself were to be given over to corruption.

For these obvious reasons no Catholic theologian has ever openly and directly doubted this privilege of Mary, not even those who, for lack of positive proof, doubted the certainty of Mary's anticipated resurrection. It is evident that the imperishableness of Mary's body is also contained, *a fortiori*, in the teaching regarding its immediate resurrection and in the teachings of revelation to be advanced for it. Essentially, however, the imperishableness is even more certain than the resurrection; for it is on a level with Mary's perfect virginity, with which, according to the Fathers, it is related. Hence it forms a principle which determines the necessity for her immediate resurrection and assumption.

From the very beginning of the deliberation, the Fathers used the comparison of the state of incorruptibility after death with that of the virginity. Thus St. Andrew of Crete wrote: "As the womb of her who brought forth the Redeemer remained ever uncorrupt, so likewise her dead body never perished. O admirable thing! Her birth escaped all corruption, and her grave did not admit that final corruption after death."<sup>26</sup> Again in the very ancient *Missale Gothicum* we read: "Who did not contract the contagion of corruption nor endure dissolution

<sup>26</sup> St. Andrew of Crete, *Or 2 de dormit.*; PG, XCVII, 1081.

(decomposition) in her grave.”<sup>27</sup> Later on, testimonies accumulated indefinitely.

This comparison is not a mere analogy. It is a theological proof or a development of the dogmatic idea of Mary’s virginal incorruption, that is, of the “Virgin consecrated by her divine espousal.” This idea is expressed also by the writer of the letter *Cogitis me* in the words, “Hence immaculate, because incorrupt,”<sup>28</sup> an expression which embraces the one element as well as the other.

In any case, the point at issue in regard to the imperishableness of Mary’s body is not a mere matter of fittingness, which allows the opposite view to be held, but a point of propriety from the opposite of which Christian sentiment recoils. Indeed, practically all theological writers, without exception, subscribe to the views held by the author of the tract *de assumptione Beatae Virginis*, ascribed to St. Augustine, and expressed in the words: “I tremble to say that that most sacred body was given as food to worms in the common process of decay, because I am unable to think so.”<sup>29</sup>

Starting from this argument *de convenientia*, the Latin Fathers in general, like this author, often speak of only a sort of moral certainty of imperishableness. As in the case of the immaculate conception, this results from the fact that Mary’s relation to Christ and God is not understood in the full sense of a divine espousal, such as appertains to the dogmatic idea of the Virgin. This is quite ob-

<sup>27</sup> *PL*, LXXII, 245.

<sup>28</sup> Pseudo-Jerome (= Paschasius Radbert.), *Epist. Cogitis me*; *PL*, XXX, 132.

<sup>29</sup> Pseudo-Augustine, *Liber de assumpt.*, c.6; *PL*, XL, 1146. The text in Migne reads somewhat different: . . . traditum quia sentire non valeo, dicere perimesco communi sorte putredinis et futuri de vermis pulveris.

vious in the writer previously mentioned. He deduces the unseemliness of the decomposition from the physical unity between mother and son according to the flesh, without appealing to the concept of the bridal unity according to the flesh as a spiritually judicial, and organic bond. But he stresses the reciprocal unity by reason of the oneness of the flesh, which he illustrates in the words, "the flesh of Jesus, the flesh of Mary."<sup>30</sup> This sentence, ascribed to St. Augustine has come to us from an anonymous writer.

For the rest, although the evil in question is less than original sin, it is evident that in Mary's intimate relation with Christ, the preservation against corruption is included as certainly as is the Immaculate Conception, perhaps even more so. Mary's espousal with God at the beginning of her life was in reality not so certain and, in any case, not so effective as the espousal solemnized and completed by Christ's conception. Hence it is not surprising that, in all those writers, whether of ancient or of modern times, who speak doubtfully concerning Mary's resurrection, no word of manifest doubt is ever expressed concerning her preservation from decomposition. And it was sound, theological tact for the Greek Fathers and the eminent theological defenders of her resurrection to stress emphatically Mary's incorruptibility. Witness the previously mentioned tract of Pseudo-Augustine.<sup>31</sup>

The inherent reasons for the imperishableness of Mary's body, as found in the Fathers, are reduced to four by

<sup>30</sup> *Op. cit.*, c.5; *PL*, XL, 1145.

<sup>31</sup> See previous chapter, note 21.

Passaglia. He calls them the legal, theological, economical, and analogical reasons.<sup>32</sup>

The legal reason is Mary's immunity from that sin upon which God laid the curse of decomposition. The theological reason is Mary's motherhood as such, since her flesh became thereby the flesh of Christ and of the Logos. These reasons may be called formal; the one removes the debt of corruption, the other lays a formal claim to incorruption, which has its root in the dignity of both Christ and His mother. Since the theological reason includes also the sublime ministry connected with the divine motherhood, and a corresponding proportional gratitude, reward, and childlike homage on the part of Christ, it likewise embraces a debt of compensation and justice. The economical reason is the same divine motherhood, since thereby Mary is the mother of grace and of all the fruits of grace, therefore also of immunity from corruption, and her body is the seat and instrument of the principle of imperishableness and the means for its union with all mankind. The analogical reason is Mary's virginity, maintained and sanctified by the divine motherhood.

The writer of the tract, *De assumptione*, summarizes these reasons at the end of his thesis in a somewhat different form. He says: "And so it seems right that, with an indescribable joy of soul and body, Mary rejoices worthily in, with, and through her own Son; that no blemish of corruption ought to follow her as no corruption of integrity followed her bringing forth of such a Son: so that she who was imbued with so much grace

<sup>32</sup> Passaglia, *op. cit.*, nos. 1473–81. Number 1476 speaks of a fifth reason, that of Mary's character as antithesis of Eve.

might ever be incorrupt; that life might be whole for her who brought forth the whole and perfect life for all; that she might be with Him whom she bore in her womb; that to Him whom she brought forth, kept warm, and fed, she might ever be Mary, the Mother, nurse, handmaid and follower of God.”<sup>33</sup>

At the time when belief in the tradition concerning the bodily assumption was most shaken, Hincmar of Reims emphasized the principal reasons in the following verses:

“Who when He rose from the dead, made the bodies  
Of many rise, taking them with Him to the stars of heaven.  
Holier than these together, thou art made worthy to bring  
forth

By thy virginal body the Word of life;  
The holy flesh of God remained incorrupt in the grave,  
Thine also, from whom God Himself assumed a body.”<sup>34</sup>

### MARY'S ASSUMPTION

The doctrine of the incorruptibility of Mary's body being premised, the third element of her immunity from the dominion of death follows of itself. In the language of the Church it is indicated preferably in this manner: The raising up and glorification of the body, in Mary's case, must not await the general resurrection, but, as in the case of Christ, must take place within the shortest pos-

<sup>33</sup> Pseudo-Augustine, *Lib. de ass.*, *PL*, XL, 1148.

<sup>34</sup> Hincmar of Reims, *Carmina*, II, verses 83–88 (*Mon. Germ. Hist.*, Poetae III [L. Traubel], p. 412).

*Qui dum surrexit, multorum corpora fecit  
Sugere, quos secum vexit ad astra poli.  
Sanctior his cunctis, Verbum quae gignere vitae  
Facta es digna tuo corpore virgineo;  
Quae caro sancta Dei non est corrupta sepulchro,  
Nec tua, qua corpus sumpserat ipse Deus.*

sible time, just as her death took place for no other reason than that of her conformity with Christ. For, the incorruptibility of the body, without the immediate resurrection, is so far from satisfying the reasons on which it is based, that the Fathers and theologians deal with incorruptibility and immediate resurrection in Mary's case, as in that of Christ, as correlative ideas. That correlation appears evident when we consider that, if a separation of body and soul lasted longer than the purpose of death required in the economy of redemption, that separation would just as well signify a dominion of death, as would the decomposition of the body.

Consequently, just as in the case of Christ the prophecy concerning His immunity from corruption, in view of His exemption from the bonds of death, is advanced in the Acts of the Apostles<sup>35</sup> as proof of His resurrection, so in Mary's case the imperishableness of her body includes the immediate resurrection; for with Christ she shares the exemption from the bonds of death. In fact, in this respect also, Mary's complete union with Christ is supported by a prophecy, namely, by the protovangelium.<sup>36</sup> The prophetic union between Mary and Christ, in an unconquerable and victorious enmity waged against hell, comprises the exclusion and complete overcoming of all those evils and afflictions which, through the agency of the devil, came upon mankind in and through sin, and the continuation of which is a manifestation of the kingdom of the devil at war with God, or the attempted destruction of the kingdom of God among men. According to the Apostle St. Paul,<sup>37</sup> to these evils, besides the spirit

<sup>35</sup> Acts 2:24–31.

<sup>36</sup> Gen. 3:15.

<sup>37</sup> Rom., chaps. 5 and 8; I Cor. 15:24 f., 54 ff.; Heb. 2:14 f.

and concupiscence of the flesh, death is numbered as the last enemy. And, therefore, Christ's resurrection is taken as the completion of the victory over hell, because in that too the victory over death is revealed. As Mary triumphed completely over sin in the spirit by her permanent immunity from original sin and all personal sin, and over sin in her flesh by her freedom from concupiscence and by her virginal conception of Christ, so she must also with Christ triumph over hell's dominion of death, by an immediate resurrection.

Apart from this promise, Mary's special participation with Christ in the resurrection and glorification of the body is guaranteed by a series of theological factors, based either directly or indirectly on her divine motherhood. Their meaning can be strengthened still further by the application of various general principles premised by the Sacred Scriptures:

1. In the Mother of God, precisely because she is such only through and in her body, a permanent separation of body and soul is unthinkable, just as in Christ the separation of His body and soul from His divinity would be inconceivable on account of the hypostatic union.

2. Mary's quality as motherly bride of Christ requires a permanent and complete unity of life which could be dissolved only temporarily in view of the ends of that union. To this the teaching of St. Paul <sup>38</sup> must be applied concerning the love of a man for his wife as his flesh, which was ideally realized in Christ's love for His Church; and this the more so since Mary, in a singular way, is the flesh of Christ and the principal member of His Church. Accordingly, the power of Christ's love for His Church had

<sup>38</sup> Eph. 5:25 ff.

to be revealed in Mary in a specific and complete manner.

3. To this can be added the principles of the Sacred Scriptures concerning the honor due to father and mother, and also concerning the participation in Christ's glory, promised to those who share in His sufferings and death. The honor of the mother requires the complete safeguarding of her entire existence. The material service performed by Mary, whereby she used the substance of her body for the formation and sustenance of Christ, demands the glorification of her body in a distinctive manner. Furthermore, Mary's singular, intimate, and absolute union with Christ in His sufferings and death requires the perfect participation with Him in His life of glory.

4. As instrument and cooperator in the work of redemption, Mary must most perfectly experience in herself the fruits of that sublime work; and this fruit so much the more, since only in a risen and glorified body could she, in union with Christ, effectively continue her office as mediatrix, and be the perfect surety of the efficacy of the act of redemption for the rest of mankind. In this respect it may be said that, without Mary's resurrection and glorification, there would have been not only a weakening of that union with Christ, in virtue of which as the new Eve, she belongs at the side of the heavenly Adam for the complete possession of life, but the guaranty for our redemption would also be lacking precisely where, apart from Christ, the evidence of the efficacy of redemption should be most sought and expected. Moreover, in the economy of redemption, the peculiar type of the indefectibility and eternal vitality of the Church would be lacking.

Since the time of Sts. Modestus of Jerusalem and Andrew of Crete, the words of the psalm, "Arise, O Lord, into Thy resting place: Thou and the ark which Thou hast sanctified,"<sup>39</sup> as also the triple transfer of the Ark of the Covenant (through the river Jordan into the promised land, up Mount Sion, and into the temple of Solomon) were applied to Mary's assumption into heaven, and indeed, to her bodily assumption, inasmuch as the Ark of the Covenant in particular was a figure of Mary's body. In the light of all these reasons, this application does not seem to be arbitrary, but a symbolism fully justified. Everything indicates that the Ark of the Covenant, which St. John beheld in heaven in the temple of God,<sup>40</sup> is nothing else but a symbol of Mary, and that thus the fulfillment of the figure is proved. In connection with the counterpart of the Ark of the Covenant, the vision of the "Woman clothed with the sun" appearing in heaven, which immediately follows<sup>41</sup> and without doubt has reference to the prophecy of the protevangelium, must be understood as follows: The features of this representation of the Church, which are generally taken from the representation of Christ's mother, point especially to the Mother of Christ already glorified in body and soul. For, only in her completed glorification is she the perfect figure of the heavenly nature of the Church and of her invincibility in the conflict against the dragon. Only in this way, as the sign in heaven, does she form the counterpart of the sign on earth in Isaias and Jeremias.<sup>42</sup>

Thus it was precisely in St. John, from whom the

<sup>39</sup> Ps. 131:8.

<sup>40</sup> Apoc. 11:19.

<sup>41</sup> Apoc. 12:1 ff. See Vol. I, last part of chap. 1.

<sup>42</sup> Isa. 7:14; Jer. 31:22; see Vol. I, chap. 2.

first mention of Mary's death is expected and to whom, therefore, the ancient legends concerning Mary's death were traced, that an indication of that passing away was actually given. It is true that this indication is to be understood in a mystical manner, but for that very reason it indicates the profound and dogmatic meaning of the fact in a most significant way: rather, it presents the fact entirely from its dogmatic point of view. If besides it were definitely established that the saints, who rose on the occasion of Christ's death, rose to immortal life, that would furnish an analogous argument for Mary's resurrection, as in the sanctification of St. John the Baptist a warrant is found for her immaculate conception. But that fact is anything but certain.

In any case, Mary's bodily assumption into heaven is so firmly established in the biblical and ecclesiastical idea of her person, and is so clearly contained therein, that the Church needs no special historical tradition to establish it. Hence, from its very beginning the ecclesiastical feast of the passing away or the assumption of the Mother of God, in contrast with the death of other saints, quite entirely of itself took the form of a feast of the glorification of her body and soul. Even if in this the East took more or less account of the historical tradition, or the empty tomb, still the idea proper lay entirely in the dogmatic field. In the Latin Church, it is the more evident that the Church's concept of the feast was independent of the legends, since at the very time that Pope Gelasius pronounced apocryphal the book *de transitu*, (or shortly after) the Latin liturgies began to explain the purport of the fact on distinctly theological lines.

It was, therefore, a complete misjudgment of the state

of affairs, for the writer of the letter *Cogitis me* to have overlooked this dogmatic and liturgical testimony of the Church and all arguments comprised in the dignity and position of the Mother of God, and to have considered the fact as dubious and unproven, just because it was not related in an authentic and historical writing, but only in the apocrypha, condemned by Pope Gelasius. Since this letter was current under the name of St. Jerome, it caused confusion for a long time in the minds of the West and weakened the firmness of the testimony, just as the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, since the twelfth century, met with opposition, because it was ascertained that only uncertain revelations of later date argued in its favor, whereas the ancient and certain revelation could only with difficulty be reconciled therewith.

The more one reverted to the liturgical testimony and the theological foundation, the stronger the conviction grew; so that for centuries the thesis of Mary's bodily assumption into heaven was no longer presented merely as a pious opinion. Its denial was censured as audacious in the strictest sense of the word.<sup>43</sup> The attempt of many scholarly critics, at the end of the seventeenth century, to weaken the value of the more ancient patristic and liturgical testimonies together with their historical foundation, failed all the more to disturb the now assured and universal conviction, since for the most part these scholars themselves declared that this meaning deserved fullest attention and carried considerable weight.

The first and most important scriptural argument from Genesis (3:15) is advanced as the main argument in

<sup>43</sup> E.g., Melchior Cano, *De locis theol.*, XII, 10; De Lugo, *De virtute fidei div.*, disp. 20, sect. 3, no. 96; Billuart, *De myst. Christi*, diss. 14, a. 2.

the request for a dogmatic definition of the doctrine presented in 1870, although formerly the theologians paid little attention to that text.<sup>44</sup> The other biblical and theological arguments were found mainly in the festal sermons of the Greek Fathers, beginning with St. Modestus, as also in the *Tractatus de assumptione beatae Virginis* from Pseudo-Augustine.<sup>45</sup> St. John Damascene for example, writes: "It was becoming that this divine dwelling, this undug well of cleansing water, this unploughed field of celestial bread, this never irrigated vineyard of heavenly grapes, this olive-tree of paternal compassion, laden with ever-new foliage and beautiful fruits, was never confined to the inner parts of the earth; but rather, as He on the third day had raised from the sepulcher that holy and incorrupt body which He had taken from her and had united to His own person, so also this mother was snatched from the grave and conformed to her Son; and as He had descended to her, so she, as being closely united with that greater and more perfect tabernacle (i.e., the flesh of Christ), was taken up into heaven. It was becoming that she, who had received the Word of God in the guest-chamber of her womb, should be placed in the tents of her Son; and as the Lord had said that He must be about His Father's business, so it was also fitting for the mother to dwell in the home of her Son, i.e., in the house of the Lord and the dwelling of our God. It was becoming that the body of her who had preserved her virginity without stain should also after death be preserved incorrupt. It was fitting that she who had looked up to her Son on the cross, receiving there the sword

<sup>44</sup> Gen. 3:15; Martin, *op. cit.*

<sup>45</sup> See note 33 *supra*.

through her soul which in bearing Him she had escaped, should behold that Son now seated with His Father.”<sup>46</sup>

Later, Peter de La Celle wrote, in connection with the text from Jeremias, “Return, O virgin of Israel, return to these thy cities”<sup>47</sup>: “First, return from the captivity of the world: because she should not be held in captivity, by whom those who are in captivity are to be freed. Secondly, return from mankind without corruption of the flesh: because, as thou art immune from the corruption of sin, so must thou go into immortality, mortality being taken away by the grace of God. Thirdly, return to the freedom of the glory of the children of God: because, as sin never reigned in thy mortal body, so art thou worthy, in that same virginal flesh, fully to enjoy the freedom of the spirit, which the angels enjoyed in their spiritual substance from the moment of their creation, or rather of their confirmation. Fourthly, return, that we may gaze upon thee in the exalted position among the angels and in the glory of those already beatified: because, as we long to be in the presence of thy Son, so we desire to gaze upon the glory and beauty of thy face, and we shall be illuminated on all sides by the light of thy countenance.”<sup>48</sup>

Regarding the text from the Apocalypse, “and the temple of God was opened in heaven, and the ark of His testament was seen in His temple,”<sup>49</sup> it should be remarked, that in this vision the ark of the covenant is obviously as symbolic as is the lamb in the other. In the Apocalypse, Christ’s humanity is always represented by

<sup>46</sup> St. John Damascene, *Or 2 de dorm.*, no. 14; *PG*, XLVI, 740.

<sup>47</sup> Jer. 31:21.

<sup>48</sup> Peter de La Celle, *Sermo 68 de ass.*; *PL*, CII, 850.

<sup>49</sup> Apoc. 11:19.

the lamb, and indeed by the lamb which stands on the throne of God, thus above the ark of the covenant. Consequently the ark cannot refer to Christ. Accordingly, it can refer only to the mother of the lamb, either exclusively or at least primarily. For, the Church is never referred to as the "ark of the covenant," but always as "the City or House of God."

Here the reference to Mary is seen to be more fitting, because then a beautiful connection is made in the text between what precedes and what follows. For, the preceding figure of the two witnesses<sup>50</sup> who, having been murdered in Babylon, ascend into heaven and afterwards descend in order to rise again in their bodies, most naturally corresponds to the death of the two princes of the apostles. This figure represents how they themselves, and also the popes and bishops martyred after them, live again in their successors, and thus put to shame the efforts, of hell to destroy the Church. This applies especially to the last period of the persecutions under Diocletian, from which the Church emerged victorious. With this is most significantly linked the reference to the glorification of the Mother and Queen of the Apostles and of the Church. During the first phase of the conflict Mary remained on earth; but by her assumption into heaven and by her personal return to life, she serves as guaranty and security for the continuation of the Church which, soon after triumphing over the pagan persecutions, must attain even on earth to full glorification.

On the other hand, the figure of the ark of the covenant, thus understood, leads to that of the "woman clothed with the sun." For, the ark of the covenant,

<sup>50</sup> Apoc. 11:3-12.

clothed with the glory of the Lord, is as complete and analogous a figure as the "woman clothed with the sun." In Mary this latter figure must also especially symbolize the invincibility and immortality of the Church in her struggle against the powers of darkness, which is effected by her being clothed with divine glory and power. This again points to Mary's bodily assumption into heaven.

The testimonies of tradition to Mary's bodily assumption into heaven, and also the controversies concerning it, center around the feast, as was the case with the Immaculate Conception. But here there are practically no witnesses for the introduction of the feast, and probably the feast itself is much older than the most ancient and positive testimonies concerning it indicate.<sup>51</sup> Most probably it was introduced very soon after the Council of Ephesus in the East and West, as the first individual feast of the Mother of God, for all earlier ones were at the same time feasts of our Lord. By this feast Mary was honored in her own person, for her individual holiness, as are other saints, on the day of her "passing away," her "passing over" or her "birth into heaven."

Such a reflection of Christ's ascension presents itself naturally in Mary's assumption from a double aspect. First, it was an elevation above all creatures. Secondly, it was an immediate assumption of the entire person, soul and body. This meaning cannot, indeed, be deduced from the name itself, since the latter is used at times for

<sup>51</sup> The first fixed date is given us by Nicephorus Callistos (*Hist. Eccl.*, XVIII, 18; *PG*, CXLVII, 292), who tells us that about the year 600 Emperor Maurice made the *κοίμησις* of Mary to be celebrated on August 15. Sermons about the Assumption appear actually only in the beginning of the seventh century. The former feast, which was celebrated in the middle of the month of January, may indeed have commemorated Mary's "passing away," but certainly not her assumption into heaven.

other saints also. But neither can it be inferred from the other names of the feast ("falling asleep," "resting," "passing over") that in Mary's case nothing more was meant by such expressions than in the case of other saints.

The festal sermons of the Greek Fathers remove all doubt as to the purport of the original idea of the feast. The secret prayers of the *Sacramentarium Gelasianum*, it is true, contain a mere indication, but certainly a significant one. It reads: "Almighty and eternal God who hast willed to connect the ineffable mystery of the Word of Thy Truth, of Thy only-begotten Son, to earthly bodies through the venerable and glorious Mary ever Virgin, we beseech of Thy clemency that by Thy favor we may merit to attain what we call to mind in the veneration of this mystery."<sup>52</sup> All the more distinct, in the *Sacramentarium Gregorianum*, is the collect of the procession before the Mass (which is omitted in the Roman Missal, but was taken up in many "proper" parts of the Mass itself). It reads: "May we receive eternal help, O Lord, from the festivity we celebrate this day, on which the Holy Mother of God underwent temporal death, but could not be held down by the bonds of death, because she brought forth Thy incarnate Son, our Lord."<sup>53</sup> That here the bonds of death, like the "sorrows of hell" in the Acts of the Apostles,<sup>54</sup> signify the power of death over the body, is of itself evident, but was superabundantly pointed out by St. Albert the Great.<sup>55</sup>

Still more fully is this dogmatic concept of the festal thought explained and presented in the Gothic or an-

<sup>52</sup> *PL*, LXXIV, 1174.

<sup>53</sup> *PL*, LXXVIII, 133.

<sup>54</sup> *Acts* 2:24.

<sup>55</sup> St. Albert the Great, q. 132; see also Passaglia, *op. cit.*, no. 1468, note 5.

cient Gallic Missal used in Gaul before the time of Charles the Great, and not only in one place but in three places, in codices which go back to the sixth century. In the beginning it reads: "Today's inexplicable mystery of the noble mother of our Lord, the more it is heralded, the more singular it becomes among men because of the assumption of the Virgin, whose integrity of life merited her Son, and whose death had no equal."<sup>56</sup> In the *Collectio post nomina c. defunctorum* it reads: "We beseech Him who dwells in the virginal guest-chamber, the bridegroom of that blessed nuptial chamber, the master of the house, the King of the temple who conferred such innocence upon His Mother, as made her worthy to bear the incarnate Godhead who, untainted by this world, preserved her purity of morals, who by reason of her assumption did not experience any decay because she bore the author of life: this Lord we implore in His mercy to deliver the dead from the infernal regions to the place where the body of the Blessed Virgin was borne from the grave."<sup>57</sup> Finally at the end of a detailed preface, rich in thought, it is said: "Rightly art thou happily received in thy assumption by Him whom thou by faith didst piously receive to be brought forth, so that thou, who wast untainted by this earth, mightest not be held enclosed by the rock."<sup>58</sup>

From this text also it follows that purely dogmatic reasons decided the feast, just as the object of the feast, like the feasts of our Lord, was designated as a sacrament or

<sup>56</sup> *PL*, LXXVII, 244 (Passaglia has "*apud quam* [Mariam]" and not "*apud quem* [Filium]," *op. cit.*, p. 1565; see also *Sacramentarium gallicanum*, *PL*, LXXII, 476, in which the same text is to be found).

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 245.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 246.

mystery. It appears that this was the case with the Greeks also. To the word, mystery, they joined the secondary concept, already given it by St. Basil<sup>59</sup> namely, of a truth which is not clearly enunciated in the Sacred Scriptures. The matter is especially clear in St. John Damascene. First he explains the purport of the feast dogmatically and argues in support of it. Only then does he proceed to present the external circumstances of Mary's death, which come to us from the scant data of historical tradition.<sup>60</sup>

John of Euboea also elucidated very beautifully the dogmatic significance of this feast in relation to the ten other feasts of our Lord and His Mother. He writes: "Besides the full round of ten solemnities, we celebrate also the life-bearing dormition of the Mother of God. We do so after the ascension into heaven of our Lord Jesus Christ and the descent of the most holy and vivifying Spirit upon the blessed apostles. This is called both a great and the final feast, because it is the completion of the benign economy of our Lord and God."<sup>61</sup> The Greek text is somewhat corrupt, but the sense, as here given, is evident.

Because of the lack of explicit and positive testimonies from the Sacred Scriptures and tradition, a doubt as to the soundness of the festal idea seems to have arisen in the East in the seventh century. But it was of a temporary nature, so that since the eighth century the Eastern tradition is unanimous and decisive, and all the Eastern Churches celebrate the feast in the sense of the bodily assumption.

<sup>59</sup> St. Basil, *Lib. de Spir.* S. c.27, no. 66; PG, XXXII, 189.

<sup>60</sup> St. John Damascene, *Or. 2 de dorm.*; PG, XCVI, 724-29.

<sup>61</sup> John of Euboea, *Or. in concept. s. Deip.*, no. 22; PG, XCVI, 1497; see also A. Ballerini, *Sylloge monumentorum . . .*, I, 101.

The Armenians even inserted this meaning of the bodily assumption in their profession of unity (1342) in these words: "The Church of the Armenians believes and holds that, by the power of Christ, the Holy Mother of God was bodily assumed into heaven." <sup>62</sup> At the Greek schismatic synod of Jerusalem (1672), held against the Protestants, some very decisive and beautiful explanations on this subject were quoted from various sermons of Cyril Lucaris whom the Protestants had claimed as their own, as proofs of his orthodox doctrine.<sup>63</sup>

In the West, after the time of Charlemagne, much doubt was aroused by the letter of Pseudo-Jerome, pointing out the lack of reliable documents and the danger of following the apocrypha. The writer, otherwise a clever theologian, allows the defenders of the bodily assumption to advance nothing more than the analogies from the legend about the death of John the Evangelist, and from the text of the Sacred Scriptures concerning the just who rose with Christ. In so far as the resurrection of these latter was permanent, as is probably the case, he admits that from this the conclusion can be drawn for the resurrection of Mary, and then concludes, "that we do not deny this fact concerning the Blessed Virgin Mary, although for the sake of prudence (that doubtful matters may not be accepted as certain) it is more fitting to hold the opinion out of a pious desire, rather than to define inconsiderately what cannot be known for certain without danger of error."<sup>64</sup>

Also the writer of the homily, found among St. Augus-

<sup>62</sup> Mansi, *SS. Conciliorum nova collectio*, XXV (1782), 1218.

<sup>63</sup> Hardouin, *Acta Conciliorum . . .*, XI (1715), 198 f.

<sup>64</sup> Pseudo-Jerome (= Pash. Radbert.), *Epist. Cogitis me; PL*, XXX, 124 (*de parenthesis* is taken from 123).

tine's works, *In assumptione beatae Virginis*, warns against the apocrypha and states that Catholic historical authority is lacking concerning the fact and "manner in which the Virgin Mary passed from here to the heavenly regions"; that it would be foolish, however, to look for her body on earth, since even the body of Moses is not to be found here; that we need not be concerned about the place where her body rests; it is sufficient to know that Mary, as Queen of Angels, reigns in heaven.<sup>65</sup>

The doubts aroused by that letter obtained large and steady circulation by the insertion of the excerpt in question into the *Homiliarium* of Charles the Great<sup>66</sup> and later into many breviaries. Similarly, a memorandum, based on this letter, was inserted in the Martyrology of St. Ado of Vienne,<sup>67</sup> and from there in that of Usuard. In the latter it reads as follows: "Where that venerable temple of the Holy Ghost is concealed by divine will and decree, the Church devoutly preferred not to know, rather than to teach something frivolous or apocryphal which had to be held."<sup>68</sup> It is remarkable that the fear of the apocrypha was aroused here by an apocryphal document!<sup>69</sup>

Against these outward objections, the author of the *Tractatus de assumptione B.V.*<sup>70</sup> ventured only with timidity to assert the theological reasons. The fact that soon he himself was thought to be St. Augustine did much

<sup>65</sup> Pseudo-Augustine (=Ambrose Autpertus), *Serm*, 208 *de ass.*, no. 2; *PL*, XXXIX, 2130.

<sup>66</sup> *PL*, XCV, 1490, 1497–1504.

<sup>67</sup> Ado of Vienna, *Martyrol.*, *Libellus de festiv. apost. et relig.*, 4 Idus Sept.; *PL*, CXXIII, 202.

<sup>68</sup> Usuardus, *Martyrol.*, 18 Kal. Sept., *PL*, CXXIV, 365 (the same text as found in Ado).

<sup>69</sup> The apocryphal document in question is the *Epistola, Cogitis me*, ascribed to St. Jerome.

<sup>70</sup> Pseudo-Augustine (Anonymous), *Liber de ass.*; see note 29 supra.

to weaken the objection based on the authority of the Pseudo-Jerome, and to justify the theological reasoning against the one-sided standpoint of the exegete and historian.<sup>71</sup> It was this theological reasoning, together with the appeal to the oration *Veneranda*, but by no means any regard for the Marian legend from which, only incidentally, the text from Pseudo-Dionysius was taken, which confirmed the ever growing conviction among the theologians of the Middle Ages. It is true that the aid of the supposedly historical tradition and of many non-genuine texts from the Fathers<sup>72</sup> was later invoked. But this only resulted in exposing the doctrine to new attacks, which did not fail to appear.

The renewal of the controversy in the seventeenth century took place as a result of the fact that the cathedral chapter of Paris requested the cancellation of the note in the Usuard Martyrology, there in use. Canon Joly, together with Launoy,<sup>73</sup> who were later joined by Tillemont<sup>74</sup> and to a certain extent by Alexander Natalis,<sup>75</sup> renewed the critical objections in behalf of the moderation of the Church, and included also the ancient patristic and liturgical documents.

In the rebuttals, which have since appeared, the authors, unfortunately, were often led from the purely theological standpoint to the defense of documents which were incapable of defense or were useless. Even Lana, who sharply criticised the faults of his predecessors, went himself too far. However, his was the most complete and

<sup>71</sup> This was clearly seen by St. Albert the Great, *Mariale*, q.131 (edited by Jammy, XX, 89), and also by St. Thomas, IIIa, q.27, a.1 corp.

<sup>72</sup> E.g., St. Peter Canisius, *De virg. Deip.*, lib. 5, cap. 4 et 5.

<sup>73</sup> See Bellamy, art. "Assomption," in *Dict. de théol. cath.*, I, 2131.

<sup>74</sup> Tillemont, *Mémoires*, etc., I, *Notes sur la S.V.*, 16.

<sup>75</sup> Natal. Alexander, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, Saec. 2, cap. 4, art 3.

universal refutation <sup>76</sup> of the critical objections, so far as this can be given.

According to what has been said so far, a dogmatic definition of Mary's bodily assumption would be just as possible as was that of the Immaculate Conception. When we consider the inner relationship between these two doctrines, and especially what has been explained concerning the texts from the Apocalypse, the dogmatic definition would appear most appropriate for our times. In any case, such a definition would not only fulfill the pious desires for Mary's complete glorification, but would also define a dogma which occupies an important position in the whole system of doctrines, among others, Mary's assumption as a counterpart of Christ's resurrection.

It could be said that, as Christ's resurrection, strikingly established by eyewitnesses, forms the material and formal foundation of Christian faith and hope, so Mary's resurrection, which is guaranteed together with and by that of Christ and forms only the material contents of faith, is next to Christ the climax of faith in the objectively accomplished work of redemption and forms a secondary guaranty of Christian hope. Thus stated, the analogy as well as the essential difference between both facts is emphasized.

On the other hand, the difference is minimized too much when it is asserted, that all internal reasons for Christ's resurrection hold also proportionally for that of Mary, or when the latter and the former are presented alike as established and handed down on the testimony of the twelve apostles as eyewitnesses.

<sup>76</sup> *Lana*, 1880.

**PART V**

**MARY THE MEDIATRIX**

## CHAPTER IX

### Mary's Supernatural Activity

**B**EFORE considering the activity the Mother of the Redeemer displayed in the work of redemption, it will be well for us to define her special vocation and her capability with regard to the supernatural activity which results from the distinguishing mark of her person or from the grace of her motherhood.

The grace of her motherhood is the principle of a supernatural activity specifically her own, analogous to Christ's grace of union in His humanity. It endows this activity with a power and dignity all its own.

This power of Mary must not be traced to the fact that her activity simply proceeds from and belongs to a divine person. It remains that of a created being united with Christ and God as His bride. But from that particular relationship it draws a distinctive power and dignity. To that extent, therefore, her supernatural activity must be constituted like that of other human beings.

The distinguishing mark of her person as bride of Christ is conceived fully in her capacity of bearer and temple of the Holy Ghost. Likewise, the foundation for this special power and dignity of her activity must be traced to this capacity of her person. Thus it must be found formally in the fact that Mary is the organ of the Holy Ghost, who works in her in the same way that Christ's humanity is the instrument of the Logos. And

this in a more complete and distinctive sense than can be the case in other created beings.

For this reason Mary's supernatural activity answering to this distinguishing mark is further defined as follows.

#### MARY THE DYNAMIC AND AUTHORITATIVE ORGAN OF THE HOLY GHOST

After the conception of the Son of God, Mary appears as a dynamic and authoritative organ of the Holy Ghost<sup>1</sup> in the physical influence she exercises upon the formation and constituting of Christ's body and His corporal life through the natural strength of her heart and soul; this influence is moved and sustained by the power of the Holy Ghost. She cooperates in the birth of the Son of God *ad extra* when He is given to mankind, or helps to realize the effusion of the eternal Light into the world.

In this respect, to the exclusion of all other creatures, Mary alone cooperates in this most sublime and supernatural work of God, and she does this in a manner superlatively more perfect than the cooperation of any other creature in the supernatural works of God, as, e.g., the dispensers of the sacraments. For, in union with the Holy Ghost, Mary exercises an intrinsic influence upon the substance of the supernatural product by her own natural strength. She communicates the supernatural gift of God

<sup>1</sup> Scheeben speaks about the activity of Christ's human nature. The Scholastics speak of a physically instrumental activity; but, like the Greek Fathers, he prefers "dynamic." Scheeben writes: "This power of Christ appears as a participation in the supernatural spiritual power of God in general, which extends itself to all actions relating to the salvation of mankind, and consequently not only to the physical actions in the narrower sense of the word." Thus expressed, this power includes an authoritative character as against a purely imperative, meritorious one.

to the world as a gift which is given to her first, or co-produced by her. Thus in this work and this gift of God she participates not as a mere bearer of the divine strength or as a mere delegate from God.

This specific activity resulting from the grace of her divine motherhood is the only supernatural activity of a dynamic and authoritative nature proper to Mary, at least in the ordinary manner, and as a quasi-natural wedding gift attached to the grace of her motherhood. In respect to the effects of God's grace in others, Mary does not possess that kind of dynamic activity exercised by the organs of the Church, as for instance the vicars of Christ in the dispensing of the sacraments. Far less does she possess that activity which, as the incarnate Word, Christ exercises by His own eternal Spirit, and in which His flesh participates as flesh of the Word under the form of physical bearer of the power of the eternal Spirit.

However, Mary's dynamic and supernatural activity in the birth of Christ is the eminent and specific prototype for the intended activity in the organs of the Church. So far as the activity of the latter depends on the principle of grace born of Mary, it is included also in Mary's dynamic activity, so that it can be regarded as its reflection and extension.

On the other hand, by the fact that Mary's dynamic activity aims at Christ's activity and helps to bring it about, hers is related to His in such a manner that the effects of His activity can be ascribed, by participation, to her also as to a dynamic and cooperating factor.

Mary's flesh and blood in no wise possess a special, inherent, and vivifying power as is proper to the flesh and blood of the Logos. To the vivifying flesh of Christ hers

is only as the earth impregnated by the dew of the Holy Ghost. But her womb is and remains the original seat and her heart the living root of Christ's vivifying flesh, and to that extent every activity of Christ can be regarded as arising from her womb and especially from her heart, as the instrument of the Holy Ghost.

#### SPECIFIC AND SUPERNATURAL VALUE OF MARY'S ACTIONS

Besides this special and supernatural dynamic activity, the distinguishing mark of Mary's person attaches, in no less degree, a specific and supernatural value to her moral actions and also a moral and judicial power answering thereto.

The actions of the Mother of God may be regarded objectively as marks of honor and service toward God. As such their inner and specific value is based on the fact that her maternal services to her Son honor God in a very special way, and that the value of Christ's religious actions and the offering comprised therein is, in a special manner, included in Mary's maternal offering of these actions. That her actions might possess that specific value answering to their object, they must be performed in God's bridal manner, and thus spring from a proportionately eminent, abundant, and supernatural flow of grace from the Holy Ghost. Hence, the specific value of these actions, i.e., their specific holiness and agreeableness to God, is based on the special dignity which belongs to Mary's person as bride of the Logos and bearer of the Holy Ghost, and by virtue of which she stands in fitting relation to the dignity of the object and purport of her actions.

The value of Mary's actions, resulting from the dignity of her person, must be defined in a manner analogous to the specific value of Christ's actions, so that this is due to these actions in that they proceed from the instrument of a divine Person, and, being inspired by his Person, they are also sustained by Him.

When the Apostle says of other living temples of the Holy Ghost,<sup>2</sup> that the Holy Ghost "prays in them with unutterable sighs," this statement is all the more true of Mary. For, she is the prototype of the Church. In her public worship and prayers the Church possesses a specific and supernatural power and dignity in so far as she is the instrument of the Holy Ghost who works in and by her. This happens in a manner analogous to the divine Wisdom of the Old Testament who, prior to His hypostatic union with a human nature, was represented as functioning liturgically in the priesthood of Aaron.<sup>3</sup>

Thus conceived, Mary's religious activity, like that of Christ and the Church, has naturally a supernatural and morally judicial power, not only for her own person, but for others also, indeed, for mankind as a whole, and that from two aspects, from its object as well as its principle.

It stands to reason that this obvious power of Mary's actions, like their inner value, differs essentially from that of Christ and bears an entirely different character. The actions performed by Christ to the advantage of others possess in themselves a power which is perfectly meritorious and intrinsically capable of meriting and applying at will. Those of Mary have a power which is only imperfectly meritorious and essentially supplicatory.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. 8:26.

<sup>3</sup> Eccl. 24:14.

In the case of Christ we speak of actions meritorious in themselves, of Mary only of merit obtained from God through prayer. But, unlike the intercession of the saints, the prayer of the bride of Christ, the instrument of the Holy Ghost, the first-born daughter of the Father, bears the character of prayer eminently holy and pleasing to God, and at the same time authoritative, in the same sense in which the power of the Church's blessing is understood. For, like the prayer of the Church, that of Mary is pre-eminently a *gemitus columbae* (murmur of a dove), in which is heard the murmur of the Holy Ghost Himself.

#### MARY'S ACTIVITY CLOSELY RELATED TO THAT OF CHRIST

It is evident that the entire supernatural activity to which Mary is called by virtue of the grace of her motherhood can be exercised only in dependence on and in union and communication with that of Christ. In this Catholic idea of Mary as the new Eve, the bride of the heavenly Adam, and the instrument of the Holy Ghost, we see her really called and enabled to participate in the activity and influence of Christ in an intimate and far-reaching manner. And indeed it is but fitting that her power and activity should form an integral part, foreseen and defined by God Himself, in the work which Christ was sent to perform.

The community of power and activity between Christ and Mary is so close and all-embracing that nowhere on earth can a perfect likeness of it be found in the cooperation of any two persons. It can be understood and valued aright only by the supernatural prototype which it has in the community of action between the Holy Ghost and

the Logos, between the humanity and the divinity of Christ, as well as by the wonderful community of life between Christ and Mary before His birth. In the natural order, the cooperation and mutual influence on each other of head and heart provide the only fitting analogue. Or rather, the dynamic and mutual relation of acting and suffering existing between the head and the heart, finds here its most perfect realization in the dynamic relation of both persons.

It should be distinctly noted that the relation of the Mother of the Redeemer to the activity of her Son must not be conceived in the same way as that of other mothers to the professional activity of their sons. In the case of the latter the work of the mother is only a preparation, which consists in the spiritual and corporal education of her child. It ceases, therefore, with the beginning of his professional activity, without a direct participation in it. In Mary's case, there was no need of exercising any spiritual influence at all on her Son; rather, from the very moment of His conception, she herself was the object of His divine influence. Thus the period of maternal care given to her Son is at the same time the period of her own spiritual education for an immediate participation in the mission of her Son, in which, as His spiritual bride, she had to cooperate with Him in the rebirth of mankind. Or rather, in her womb Christ began His professional activity by offering Himself to His Father, and as a child He allowed Himself to be offered in the temple by the hands of His mother. He continued and completed His whole activity as Redeemer in such a way that He allowed His Mother to have a share in it. He performed His work, as it were, living in her heart and borne in her hands.

Hence, whereas the foster father of Christ died before Jesus began His public life, because his mission was ended, His mother had to bear Him company till His sacrificial death. She had in fact to be present at that sacrificial death. And even after His death she had to remain behind to fulfill another mission, that of mother, nurse, and comforter of His infant Church on earth.

Evidently Mary's mission did not include a participation in Christ's public activity *ad extra*, either at His side, or as His representative. Therefore, since she had no position in the visible and social organism of the Church, she had no particular right to hold a public teaching office or to exercise His priesthood. Her cooperation with Christ, like that of the heart with the head, remains a silent and hidden cooperation in its interior activity and in the interior communication of life to the members. But for that reason she cooperates precisely in that activity by which Christ pre-eminently discharges His mission as Redeemer.

## CHAPTER X

# Mary's Cooperation in General in the Work of Redemption<sup>1</sup>

### MARY AS CO-PRINCIPLE OF THE FRUITS OF THE REDEMPTION

IT IS a very ancient idea in the Church, expressed by numerous witnesses, rather, it is a definite dogma, proven by the Church's mode of reading the protogospel in the Vulgate, "She shall crush thy head,"<sup>2</sup> that the effects of Christ's redeeming death can and must be ascribed, in a very real sense, to His Mother as to their principle.

Indeed, in the writings of the Fathers and the saints, almost all titles indicating Christ in His activity as Redeemer are ascribed, in a proportional and fitting sense, to the Mother of the Redeemer also. She is thus called *salvatrix*, *reparatrix*, *restauratrix*, *liberatrix*, *reconciliatrix* of the world, in fact also *redemptrix*, as well as salvation, liberation, reconciliation, propitiation, and redemption. To her in particular are ascribed the destruction or disso-

<sup>1</sup> For literature see: Suarez, *De incarn.* disp. 23; Christoph. Vega, *Theol. Mar.*, pal. 30, cert. 4; Virg. Sedlmayer, *Theologia Mariana* (in Bourassé, *Summa Aurea*, Vol. VII), p. 2, q. 8, and p. 3, q. 2; F. W. Faber, *The Foot of the Cross* (London, 1858), chap. 9; P. Jeanjacquot, *Simples explications sur la coopération de la T. S. Vierge à l'œuvre de la rédemption*, Paris, 1868; Joach. Ventura, *La madre di Dio, madre degli uomini*; Passaglia, *De imm. conc.*, sec. 6, c. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Gen. 3:15.

lution of sin, the damnation, death, and defeat of the devil.

It is evident that in comparison with God these expressions, in Mary's case more than in the case of Christ, are to be understood in the sense of only a mediation, or intermediate cause, of the redemption. Also the name mediatrix is in her case not used in the same sense as with other saints, but in a sense analogous to that in which it is referred to Christ. In other words, she is indicated as the mediating cause of all the effects of salvation for the world at large, also for pre-Christian mankind, in particular for Adam and Eve (hence the name *reparatrix* of the first parents, *reformatrix protoplastorum*). Thus she is not only the mediatrix who applies the fruits of the redemption to individuals, but also the mediatrix who produces and gains these fruits.

On this point Passaglia<sup>3</sup> gives a great number of witnesses from tradition. Many of these titles were gathered together in a sermon preached by Cyril of Alexandria at Ephesus. In it he says: "Hail Mary Mother of God, who is to be venerated as the treasure of the whole world, the inextinguishable lamp, the crown of virginity, the scepter of orthodoxy, the indissoluble temple . . . by whom the Blessed Trinity is adored and glorified, the glorious cross is commemorated and venerated in the whole world, by whom the angels and archangels rejoice, the devils take to flight, the diabolical tempter falls from heaven, by whom the fallen are taken into heaven, by whom every creature is brought to the knowledge of the truth, by whom holy baptism and the oil of exultation reach the faithful, by whom churches are established the world over, by whom nations are brought to penance; what more shall

<sup>3</sup> Passaglia, *op. cit.*, particularly art. 4 and 5.

I say, by whom the only-begotten Son of God enlightened those who were sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death, . . . through the Blessed Trinity.”<sup>4</sup>

The title of redemptrix is in proportion used less frequently, though in the sense of liberatrix and even of payer of the ransom it is in itself equally justified with the others. It is of less frequent occurrence because the title of redeemer is reserved as a special term for the influence proper to Christ on the salvation of men, and hence its application to Mary could give the impression that Mary of herself and directly exercises the same influence as does Christ.

#### MARY'S COOPERATION DEPENDENT ON CHRIST

The influence on the redemption ascribed to the Mother of the Redeemer represents Mary, next to Christ, as another and second principle of redemption. It is obvious, as the expression, “influence of the Mother of the Redeemer,” clearly states, that Mary cannot be a principle coordinate to and independent of Christ, called and empowered to complete His redeeming power and might. On the contrary, she is subordinate to and dependent on Christ as the Redeemer in such a way that she herself is redeemed by Him, and can cooperate in the redemption only as one redeemed and with a power which she receives from Him. Hence, her activity can and should so little supplement the inner and redeeming power and might of Christ, that rather it is essentially supported by faith in Christ's power, and has for its purpose only the making this power effective in a fitting manner.

Thus Mary's influence on the redemption is that of a

<sup>4</sup> St. Cyril of Alexandria, *Homil.* 4; PG, LXXVII, 992.

mere cooperation with the Redeemer, and this cooperation is only one of ministering in Christ's act of redemption, which is the real act of redemption and which stands by itself. Mary herself is only a principle of the redemption as a cooperating partner, accepted, i.e., called and equipped, by the Redeemer. More definitely, she is a ministering partner in the execution of the work of redemption, which is carried out entirely by His power and might. In Latin this is expressed more tersely: *ministra redemptoris in opere redemptionis* (minister of the Redeemer in the work of redemption).

In modern times, from the sixteenth century on, Mary as cooperatrix in the redemption, is called also coredemptrix. This expression is capable of a very good meaning which can be rendered neither so concisely nor so exactly by any other word. But in itself, instead of emphasizing Mary's ministerial subordination and dependence, it gives the idea of a coordination next to Christ's or of a completion of Christ's power to such an extent that the expression should be used only with the express restriction, "in a certain sense."

The expression, "*adjutrix*" (helpmate) or "*adjutorium*" (help) of the Redeemer in the redemption is less objectionable and in itself more fitting, even more in accordance with Sacred Scripture. It was used for the first time by Albert the Great,<sup>5</sup> and indeed repeatedly. This help must not be understood as a support in the ordinary sense, that is, as the strengthening by another of a power which of itself is insufficient. It is used in a more general sense, as

<sup>5</sup> See Desmarais, *S. Albert le Grand, docteur de la médiation mariale*, Paris and Ottawa, 1935, and Bittremieux, *Marialia*, Brussels, 1936, pp.155-64.

the only help admissible on the part of the creature in reference to God, namely, as a service conducive to an end, or as a helpful cooperation working in its own way. Thus it is a help in the very sense of a cooperating partner, as "we are God's coadjutors" in the Vulgate.<sup>6</sup>

So understood, the expression is all the more justified because, according to the idea of the Church, Eve, as "a help like unto himself" <sup>7</sup> (Adam), is the prototype of Mary in her relation to Christ. Moreover, it is more significant because, in this connection, it better characterizes Mary's cooperation with Christ as a bridal cooperation. It presents this cooperation in a manner which brings out Mary's complete subordination and dependence, as well as her closest union with the Redeemer.

The expression *coredemptrix* is presented by many modern, even learned theologians, as though it were a classical term, sanctioned by the usage of the Fathers and the saints.<sup>8</sup> Hence, according to some theologians, though

<sup>6</sup> I Cor. 3:9. The Vulgate has *Dei sumus adjutores*. The Greek text reads: Θεοῦ ἔσμεν σμνεργοι.

<sup>7</sup> Gen. 2:18.

<sup>8</sup> Scheeben refers to a warning to his clergy by Francis Joseph, bishop of Linz, 1882. In this episcopal action must be found the reason for Scheeben's severe criticism of the title, "coredemptrix," which is used in the highest ecclesiastical circles. The Sacred Congregation of Rites (May 13, 1908) calls Mary *misericordem humani generis conredemptricem* (*Acta Sanctae Sedis*, XLI [1908], 409); Pius X (January 22, 1914) grants indulgences to an Italian prayer in which Mary is called *corredentrice del genere umano* (*Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, VI [1914], 108); Benedict XV in his letter *Inter sodalitia* has no hesitation in praising Mary so highly as to write *ut dici merito queat Ipsam cum Christo humanum genus redemisse* (*Act. Ap. Sed.*, X [1918], 182) and Pius XI writes (*Explorata res*): *Virgo per dolens redemptoris opus cum Jesu Christo participavit* (*Act. Ap. Sed.*, XV [1923], 104 ff.). See also the beautiful prayer sent to Lourdes by Pius XI, April 28, 1935, for the closing ceremony of the Jubilee.

the expression is somewhat surprising, it is by no means rash. The objection which Protestants make to it is due to their ordinary misconception. With Catholics it is a matter of taking, not giving, scandal. The title should not and will not be dropped, for the good reason that it has cost her who bears it so many and such grievous sacrifices. In spite of careful research the term is nowhere to be found before the sixteenth century. Even Maracci does not give it in his *Polyanthea*. Later it is but seldom used by prudent theologians, giving the impression that, so far as authorities are concerned, it is anything but classical.

Its intrinsic justification does not follow simply from the fact that in general Mary is a principle of salvation, or more definitely a co-principle with Christ. For, those verbs and verbal nouns which run parallel with the name of Redeemer, and those which indicate in general the effecting of salvation, like *reparator*, *liberator*, or conqueror of the devil, can be applied to Mary with or without the prefix *co*. But in the case of those words which indicate, more or less, the proper power whereby Christ Himself accomplishes His work, the application to Mary with the prefix *co* is less justified. The reason is, that this particle would indicate a sharing not only in Christ's work, but also in the manner of working which is proper to Him, and a coordination in His activity.

From the fact that Mary is *mediatrix*, and indeed as Christ is mediator between God and men, it does not follow that she can be called also *commediatrix* between God and men. Still less does it follow that from the fact of Mary's being, in a broader sense, cause, *ministra*, and mediatrix of the redemption and, therefore, is even called

redemptrix, we should claim the right to say that she is coredemptrix. For, in the case of Christ, redeeming formally means causing the liberation of men by His divine, royal, and priestly power and by a ransom which He Himself pays. Consequently, the expression, *coredemptrix*, is essentially homonymous with *consacerdotissa* and *convictima*. *Consacerdotissa* is never used, and the simple form of *sacerdotissa* but seldom. *Convictima* would sound very strange in the consequently required expression, *convictima* of the redemption.<sup>9</sup>

Nevertheless, it can be understood in a very true sense, and this sense is easy to indicate, if, in the hieratical idea of the sacrifice of redemption, the correct place is given to the maternal bride of the Redeemer.<sup>10</sup>

Albert the Great uses the term "aid of the redemption" in his *Mariale*.<sup>11</sup> Theologians of later date, like St. Antoninus, in part go back to him explicitly. In general, there is little certainty about the terminology on this point, because the matter has received but a scant scientific treatment. For the same reason, however, the recent use of the title, *coredemptrix*, is in itself no argument against it, for in former times little attention was paid to the true thought which underlies this matter.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Many theological expressions become clarified by controversy and their soundness or unsoundness eventually becomes established and accepted. Development of doctrine did not come to an end with the Church Fathers. The same may be said with regard to the exact meaning of certain titles applied to the Blessed Virgin. Thus Scheeben questioned the fitness of the title "Coredemptrix." But since his day the title has been sanctioned by the highest ecclesiastical authorities, and its orthodoxy is therefore beyond doubt.

<sup>10</sup> St. Albert the Great, *Mariale*, q. 29 and 150 (edited by Jammy, XX, 31, 105).

<sup>11</sup> For the present state of the question, see Bitremieux, *Marialia*, particularly pp. 193 f.

<sup>12</sup> Rom. 5:12.

### THE COURSE OF THE REDEMPTION AND THAT OF THE FALL

It is a well-established fact that, because of her co-operation in the redemption, Mary became truly the contributory cause of the effects of the redemption. This fact, as to its form and reason, has been explained by the remark that, according to God's plan, the course of our redemption should answer to that of the Fall. On the part of God, the redemption must be considered a work of emulation in opposition to the causing of the Fall on the part of the devil.

The fall of the human race was effected by the devil with the help of a man and a woman. The woman as well as the man, although each in a different way, can and must be regarded as the cause of the Fall. Hence the redemption had to be effected not by the new Adam alone, but with the cooperation of a new Eve, and thus a woman must become a cause of the redemption, since a woman had been a cause of the Fall. As in the cause of the Fall a woman had the initiative, so in the redemption a woman must prepare the way by her activity.

The relation between the economy of the redemption and the origin of the Fall holds the secret. Both sexes having had their share in causing the Fall, both must likewise have their share in bringing about the restoration. Both sexes are united in disgrace and in glory. The devil conquered both in the beginning and, therefore, his defeat was the more complete in the end. And God was given back that honor which had been withheld from Him in the Fall, when a man and a woman cooperated in the

service of the enemy to the disfigurement of the divine likeness.

The same relation explains how both factors in this economy could and had to cooperate, so that the whole work might be ascribed to each, while a perfect dependence and subordination of one to the other was maintained. According to St. Paul, since Adam was the head of the race, from his sin alone resulted the guilt of the race. His sin alone, without that of Eve, put the burden of sin on the race. Apart from its relation to Adam's sin, the sin of Eve in itself had no influence on the sinfulness of the race. It wielded an influence only in that it was the means by which Adam was led to sin and on which, therefore, the realization of Adam's sin depended.

Since in this way Eve knowingly and willingly gave occasion to Adam's sin, even though she may not have had all consequent results of her action directly in mind, she was, nevertheless, the true and real cause of these results; as in general a person by advice or command is the cause of the consequences ensuing from the actions of another. Yet Adam's independent responsibility as cause was mitigated so little thereby, that Eve's culpability rather fades before that of Adam. As a matter of fact, the independent and sufficient causality of Adam permits us to regard Eve's sin, not only as a preparation for, but also as a complement to that of Adam in its universal meaning and influence. This viewpoint is not usually brought out, though it is of great importance. Indeed, the sin of our ancestress Eve is a complement to that of our ancestor Adam, since it completes his, so as to form a combined sin of our ancestors. It thereby gives to both ancestors,

and so to the whole principle of natural propagation, a form which fits in with the propagation of the ancestor's sin. For, while the sin of the ancestor could have been propagated according to its nature, if Eve had not sinned, still such a propagation, through an ancestress who remained in the state of the original justice, would have been incongruous and unnatural. Consequently, apart from its influence on Adam's sin, that of Eve had this significance also, that Eve thereby made herself an instrument for the propagation of Adam's sin, and made her children subject to the influence of that ancestor's sin.

It is announced in the protevangelium,<sup>13</sup> that the woman with her seed, consequently with her Son, would participate in the victory over the devil, that is, in the liberation of mankind from the dominion of the devil, because the first woman had a share in the victory of the devil over mankind. Otherwise the indication of the woman, in the enmity announced to the devil, would be void of meaning. The fulfillment of this divine ordinance is evidenced by the facts. As this apostle witnesses the fulfillment of the one part with the words: "Wherefore as by one man sin entered into this world and by sin death . . . so also by the justice of one, unto all men to justification of life";<sup>14</sup> so likewise, from of old, in contrast with the text: "From the woman came the beginning of sin, and by her we all die,"<sup>15</sup> the parallel was rightly drawn: "From the woman came the beginning of justice, and by her we all live."

The parallel between the pair that saved and the pair

<sup>13</sup> Gen. 3:15. See Vol. I, appendix 1.

<sup>14</sup> Rom. 5:12, 18.

<sup>15</sup> Eccl. 25:33.

that ruined is developed by the most ancient Fathers, and very frequently since their time. St. Justin says: "the Son of God became man that He might undo the disobedience, coming from the serpent, in the same way as it began. For Eve, still a virgin and undefiled, accepted the word of the devil and brought forth death and disobedience; but the Virgin Mary, filled with faith and joy, anwered the Archangel Gabriel's glad tidings: Be it done unto me according to thy word." <sup>16</sup> Tertullian says: "By a rival operation God recovered His image and likeness, seized by the devil. For a word causing death had stolen into Eve, until then a virgin. In like manner, the Word of God, imparting life, was to be introduced into a virgin; so that what by this sex had gone to perdition, He might, by the same sex, bring back to salvation. Eve had believed the serpent, Mary believed Gabriel. The wrong done by the credulity of the former was obliterated by the faith of the latter." <sup>17</sup>

Irenaeus says: "That which is bound together is loosened in no other way than by unwinding the same cords in reverse, so that the first cords are loosened by the second, the second in turn loosen the first. So it happens that the first bond is loosened by the second, in fact the second takes the place of the loosing of the first. And, therefore, the Lord said, that the first should indeed be last and the last first. . . . The Lord is the firstborn from the dead, and receiving our first parents in His bosom He regenerated them to the life of God. He is made the beginning of the living, as Adam is the beginning of the dead. . . . And so the knot of Eve's disobedience was

<sup>16</sup> St. Justin, *Dial. cum Tryph.*, chap. 100; PG, VI, 709-12.

<sup>17</sup> Tertullian, *De carne Christi*, chap. 17; PL, II, 782.

loosened by Mary's obedience. For what the virgin Eve bound up by her incredulity, the Virgin Mary loosened by her faith." And again Irenaeus says: "As Eve is seduced by the words of a fallen angel to flee from God when she was untrue to His word; so to Mary are brought the glad tidings, so that she might bear God by being obedient to His word. If Eve had disobeyed God, Mary was persuaded to obey Him, so that the Virgin Mary should become the advocate of the virgin Eve. And, therefore, as the human race is made subject to death by a virgin, so is it saved by a virgin. The scale is put at an equal balance, that is, virginal disobedience is offset by virginal obedience."<sup>18</sup>

St. Augustine cites this last quotation.<sup>19</sup> He himself formulates the parallel as follows: "It is a great sacrament that, as death came to us by a woman, life was born to us by a woman; so that in both sexes feminine and masculine, the devil, being conquered, might be tormented, as he had gloried in the downfall of both. He would not have been adequately punished, had both sexes been freed, but we had not been freed by both."<sup>20</sup> On another occasion, he connected the fact, that it was women who announced the redemption as accomplished in Christ's resurrection, with the other facts of the woman's role both in the Fall and in the redemption. He says: "Because man fell through the female sex, he is restored

<sup>18</sup> St. Irenaeus, *Adv. haereses*, III, 22; V, 19; *PG*, VII, 959, 1175. A footnote in *PG* reads: *Obscurior tota haec Irenaei argumentatio est.* See M. A. Genervois, "La maternité spirituelle de Marie selon S. Irénée," in *Revue Thomiste*, XIX (1936), 26-51.

<sup>19</sup> St. Augustine, *Contr. Julian.*, Vol. I, chap. 3; *PL*, XLIV, 644.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.* *De agone christ.*, chap. 22; *PL*, XL, 303.

by the same sex. Because a virgin brought forth Christ, a woman announced His resurrection. By a woman came death, by a woman, life.”<sup>21</sup> And again: “A woman handed the poison to the man who was to be deceived. A woman hands salvation to the man to be restored. A woman, by bringing forth Christ, compensates for the sin of the man deceived by a woman. Hence, also women were the first to announce to the apostles that Christ had risen.”<sup>22</sup>

Usually, the doctrine of St. Augustine is proved by several quotations which, doubtless indeed, almost literally give his meaning, but which, under the form in question, are not at all, or only questionably, his. To these belong the quotations from the sermons, or books 3 and 4, the *Symb. ad catech.*, which for weak reasons, as it seems to us, were considered unauthentic<sup>23</sup> by the Maurists, but which, in any case, are not of a much later date. Also, the text from book 3, chapter 4: “To the same degree in which human nature had suffered loss, it is restored by our Lord Jesus Christ,” etc.; from book 4, chapter 1, the lesson from the second nocturn on the vigil of Pentecost, when Eve’s counterpart is applied to the Church.<sup>24</sup> The text from the second nocturn on the feast of the Nativity of Mary, “Eve the cause of sin, Mary the cause of merit,” appears in many sermons which have circulated under the name of Augustine; so, e.g., in *Sermo de Assumptione*, and in Sermon 18, resp. 21. *De nativitate*

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid. Sermo 232 de fest. pasch.*, no. 2; *PL*, XXXVIII, 1108.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid. Sermo 51 de concord. Matth. et Luc.*, no. 2; *PL*, XXXVIII, 335.

<sup>23</sup> Dom G. Morin, “*Les leçons apocr. du Brév. Rom.*” (*Rev. ben.*, VIII [1891], 273 f.), says that there is sufficient reason not to ascribe Books 2-4 to St. Augustine, because the African form of *Symbolum* is no longer explained therin.

<sup>24</sup> *PL*, XL, 655, 659-61.

*Christi*; thus, from an early date on this text seems to have been held as classical.<sup>25</sup>

St. Jerome says: "After the Virgin had conceived in her womb and brought forth the child . . . the malediction was lifted. Death by Eve, life by Mary." <sup>26</sup> We find similar utterances in many other Fathers, especially in St. Ambrose.

#### OTHER REASONS FOR MARY'S COOPERATION IN THE REDEMPTION

Although the parallel between the process of the Fall and that of the redemption indicates clearly the form and reason of Mary's cooperation in the latter, it does not elucidate both in a sufficient manner. To carry the analogy through one-sidedly would lead not only to a faulty, but to a partially erroneous, idea of the economy in the redemption.

Apart from the woman's participation in the sin, all other reasons in general, calling for the realization of the incarnation by a human mother, belong to the design giving Mary's cooperation its proper place in the plan of the redemption. Especially the following reasons: (1) In the redemption, since it is the work of the triune God, both the persons who proceed from the Father, not only the Son but also the Holy Ghost, must be represented by a special created agent. (2) Not only to a created nature, but also to a created person God wished to give the honor

<sup>25</sup> The lesson in the breviary on the feast of Mary's Nativity is literally *serm. 194 in App. S. Augustini*, nos. 1 and 2; *PL*, XXXIX, 2104, and according to G. Morin, *op. cit.*, p. 278, the lesson is from Ambrosius Autpertus, just as *Sermo Append. 208 de assumpt.*, where in no. 4 (*PL*, XXXIX, 2130) the same ideas are found. *Sermo App. 120 de nativ. Dom.* appears in *PL*, XXXIX, 1985.

<sup>26</sup> St. Jerome, *epist. 22 ad Eustoch.*, *PL*, XXII, 408.

of cooperating in His sublime work, in order thus to make the abundance and graded regulation of the communication of His grace richer and more harmonious. (3) A human being, one to be redeemed, and hence participating passively in the redemption, was to take an active part in the execution of the redemption, in the name of the rest of mankind. By preparation of and participation in the redeeming sacrifice, this person was perfectly to achieve the appropriation of the redeeming act and its effects upon mankind in general. (4) Finally, by the participation of a female specifically destined to be associated with Christ to the ends mentioned, and who, as the maternal bride of Christ, became in her cooperation with Him the spiritual mother of the remaining members of the redeemed, these latter will have greater confidence of receiving the fruits of redemption, and thus will strive for them more courageously.

All these reasons obviously demand Mary's cooperation, not in order to achieve or complete the intrinsic power of the redeeming work, but only to perfect its beauty and loveliness in all respects, especially its organic connection with mankind to be redeemed, whereby the perfect completion of its application and applicability was conditioned.

St. Bernard explains the latter point thus: "One man and one woman harmed us grievously. Thanks to God, all things are restored by one man and one woman, and that with interest. It is true that Christ would have been adequate, since all our sufficiency is from Him, but it was not good for us that it should be a man alone. It was more appropriate that both sexes should take part in our reparation, since both had wrought our ruin. Jesus Christ

as man obviously is the trustworthy and able mediator between God and man, but mankind honors in Him His divine majesty. Not only His mercy but also His judgment is sung. There is thus need of a mediator with that mediator, and none could be more fitting than Mary. Why should human frailty hesitate to approach Mary? There is nothing severe, nothing terrible about her; she is all sweet and offers to all milk and wool.”<sup>27</sup>

From the positive and supernatural character of the work of redemption in contrast to the work of the Fall, there follow important differences as to the manner of cooperation on the part of the woman. (1) Eve's cooperation was only material and indirect, because the fall of the race was not formally meant thereby, but only foreseen. In the strictest sense of the word, Mary's cooperation was formal, because it was supported entirely by the loving purpose of achieving the redemption of mankind. (2) Eve cooperated in the Fall by her purely natural power. Mary cooperated by virtue of a supernatural elevation and ordination, in so far as she, as chosen instrument of the Holy Ghost, was associated with the incarnate Logos, and by a power which, in turn, came to her from the merits of the Redeemer. (3) Lastly, only the existence of Adam's calamitous deed depended on Eve's cooperation, whereas Mary's cooperation conditioned the existence of the substantial principle, or of the instrument for the redeeming activity.

<sup>27</sup> St. Bernard, *Sermo de 12 praerog.*, no. 1; *PL*, CLXXXII, 429.

## CHAPTER XI

### Mary's Cooperation in Its Concrete Form<sup>1</sup>

**A**S a rule, only in one or other respect do the Fathers and theologians define the manner in which, by her cooperation with the Redeemer, Mary became with Him the cause of salvation. We shall attempt to bring the most important points of view together and explain them briefly.

#### MARY'S FUNDAMENTAL COOPERATION BY WAY OF HER MOTHERHOOD

When the Fathers introduce Mary as the general cause of salvation and from this point of view compare her with Eve, the cause of perdition, without going into further details they usually explain this attribute simply as follows: Mary, or God through Mary, presented the world with the Redeemer in the birth of Christ, as Eve, or the devil through Eve, brought perdition into the world through the seduction of Adam.

Consequently in the first place it is the divine motherhood itself, or the activity of the Mother of God, whereby

<sup>1</sup> For literature see Suarez, *De incarn.*, disp. 23; Christoph. Vega, *Theol. Mar.*, pal. 30, cert. 4; Virg. Sedlmayer, *Theologia Mariana* (in Bourassé, *Summa Aurea*, Vol. VII), p. 2, q. 8, and p. 3, q. 2; F. W. Faber, *The Foot of the Cross* (London, 1858), chap. 9; P. Jeanjacquot, *Simples explications sur la coopération de la T. S. Vierge à l'œuvre de la rédemption*, Paris, 1868; Passaglia, *De imm. conc.*, sec. 6, chap. 4.

she cooperated in the redemption of the world. In a natural way Eve, as mediatrix of the seed of the serpent, had brought forth sin in the man and thereby in the whole human race. Likewise in a supernatural way Mary, in her seed, that is, in the fruit of her body, brought into the world the personal bud of justice, that is, the essential principle of justice or justice itself, which she received from God. Hence, this very maternal activity was especially regarded as a lifting of the sin of Eve, that is, as an abolition or rather an extermination of it, because it actually prepared the redeeming act of Christ as much as Eve had prepared the calamitous deed of Adam by her seduction.

To bring out the full import of Mary's cooperation in the redemption as it is contained in her maternal activity, especially against Eve's wrong doing, other factors which are clearly found in the Gospels and the Fathers must be explained. (1) Mary's maternal activity is not a mere instrumental working of nature, but a ministerial and personal activity based on her voluntary consent to her motherhood. In this capacity she was enlisted by God for the realization of the redemption, that thereby, on her side, mankind might approach and meet Him, namely, through her voluntary reception of the principle of the redemption and her voluntary offering of herself as His instrument. (2) Because her Son is announced to her as the Redeemer of the world, this activity on her side is directed formally and directly to making the redemption possible. (3) The Fathers explain very specially, that Mary's consent to her motherhood constitutes on her part an eminently moral deed, whereby she introduced and prepared the definite act of the redemption, as much as

Eve introduced and prepared the deed of Adam by her personal sin. As to its form it is thus the exact counterpart of Eve's sin. The latter essentially consisted in believing the devil and in obeying him, or in not believing and not obeying God; and thereby Eve deserted her calling as instrument for the communication of justice, and gave herself to the devil as an instrument for the communication of sin. Mary prepared the deliverance from sin by giving herself to God in faith and obedience, in order to serve Him as an instrument for the communication of justice. As consent given to God regarding the existence of the Redeemer, this form of Mary's cooperation in the redemption is a cooperation with God the Father in the realization of the redemption; just as Eve's sin, as a consent given to the devil, was a cooperation with the latter in working the destruction of the human race. Because Eve induced Adam to accept her proposal, her sin was a direct cooperation with Adam. So, too, Mary's obedience became a cooperation with Christ Himself in His work of redemption, because Christ's first act of obedience was joined immediately to hers.

Mary's cooperation implies a true dependence of the whole work of redemption on her will. It is a dependence which was willed and arranged by God Himself, and it was such as by no means exposed the execution of the work to the danger of frustration; for together with its decree, God provided also the assurance of Mary's consent. But when this dependence is emphasized, it is not wise to carry it to the extent of saying that, if Mary had not given her consent, the redemption would not have taken place. For in that way it would seem that God had not the absolute will or power to carry the redemption into

effect and to assure Mary's consent, and that, therefore, by her consent Mary cooperated as independently with God as one man with the other.

The influence of Mary's consent must not be imagined one-sidedly as a moral influence in the sense of merits or of impetration through the moral value of the act. It must be understood as the influence of the will in an agreement, that is, as the acceptation of a good and the disposal of it, and also as the power of the will in the use of one's own powers to produce physical effects. On the other hand, we must not exclude the impetrating power of merit, which is comprised in the pious and obedient consent to a holy work performed for the glory of God. But we may not so imagine it, as if this act of Mary possessed a greater moral value and power than all her other actions. By its union with the divine action, to which it corresponds, this act of hers is certainly the richest in results among all the actions of creatures. In a certain sense it is even as rich as that of Christ's humanity. But this does not mean that, in itself, it was the most meritorious deed, and it is altogether wrong to assert that, by the act whereby Mary received the Redeemer, she merited in the proper sense all the effects of the redemption.

When the Fathers<sup>2</sup> say, that by Mary's pious and obedient consent she broke the chains in which Eve's disobedience had bound us, this must not be understood as a deliverance by adequate satisfaction for the sin of Eve, as this is true only in the case of Christ's satisfaction for all the sins of mankind. It must be understood as a preparation for the satisfaction which would be given by Christ, and whereby, together with all other sins of man-

<sup>2</sup> See *supra*, chap. 10.

kind, that also of Eve would be wiped out. Thus directly and formally Mary's activity made up only for the preparation for the sin of mankind by the sin of Eve, and for the shameful responsibility whereby the woman was laden for the *ministerium iniquitatis* rendered by her.

#### MARY'S MORAL COOPERATION BEFORE AND AFTER THE BIRTH OF CHRIST

Besides Mary's fundamental cooperation in the redemption as contained in her very activity as mother of God, there is another cooperation, a purely moral one, before as well as after the conception and birth of the Redeemer. It is closely, even inseparably, related to the latter. Partly it anticipates the moral cooperation which attends the birth, and partly it brings it to its full development.

(1) Before the conception of the Redeemer, Mary doubtless most perfectly exercised the same moral activity with which men in general had to prepare themselves for the reception of the grace of redemption, in particular men living before Christianity for the reception of the Redeemer Himself; and this activity she exercised at the moment of Christ's conception. We are referring to the pious longing for the Redeemer, and the loving obedience whereby those to be redeemed try to do all that, on their part, they can and ought to do to obtain the grace of redemption.

As chosen bride of the Logos and instrument of the Holy Ghost, and as mankind's most noble flower, untouched by sin, Mary could and had, by that activity, to prepare a worthy dwelling for the Redeemer in herself and also in the human race to be redeemed. At the same

time, by the power of the Holy Ghost working in her, she could also worthily obtain from God the sending of the Redeemer in the name and in favor of the whole race; not indeed by way of a *meritum de condigno*, but of a *meritum de congruo*, bearing the mark of a praying impetration.

The Fathers indicate this form of Mary's cooperation when they say, that Mary made the Son of God descend into her womb. Also theologians of later date have explained this form. With regard to Christ's work of redemption it remains a preparing and remote cooperation. But in a proper and stricter sense, her efficacious cooperation with the Redeemer Himself begins first at His conception and is completed in His death on the cross. This redeeming death is hardly mentioned by the Fathers and is but seldom treated by later theologians.

(2) After the conception of Christ, Mary's efficacious cooperation with Him as Redeemer, as distinct from her preparation as well as from her maternal activity, must be properly and specifically designated as a bridal cooperation. For in His mission Christ's corporal mother co-operated with Him in the closest manner as with her spiritual bridegroom. This cooperation can be, to some extent, and sometimes is absolutely, so understood, as though it were the mere continuation of Mary's former activity which, from then on, accompanied that of Christ, because by her personal merits, sufferings, and prayer she helped to obtain *de congruo* what Christ obtained by His *meritum de condigno*. Obviously a *meritum de congruo* does not add a new and greater power to the *meritum de condigno*, and thus this formula precludes a proper need of completion in Christ's merit.

The positive meaning and efficacy of the *meritum de congruo* in this case may and should consist only in this, that Mary, as the most noble member of the race to be redeemed and acting on behalf of the race, effected the application of Christ's merits; or, with due regard to their applicability as dependent on the condition of those receiving them, she even completed them. In a higher degree it is analogous in a way to what the Apostle said of himself: "I rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ, in my flesh, for His body, which is the Church."<sup>3</sup> It can be defined further as follows: the share in the merits of the Head could and should originally be gained and appropriated for the whole of mankind, by the activity which accompanies the Head's activity in the redemption and which belongs to that chief member of the body, which is in original and close communication with the Head. And this resulted, because the activity of this chief member was, in an eminent degree, united with Christ in faith, love, obedience, and mercy which, in the individual members, is the condition for the participation in the merits of the Head. Hence, also the participation in His merits must necessarily be communicated, in an organic way, by that same member, by which mankind is connected with Christ as with its Head.

It is obvious that, in this view, the moral cooperation of Mary with Christ, in the dispensing of conciliatory justice, stands counter to the cooperation of Eve with Adam, since the sin of the ancestor was completed by the sin of the ancestress to become the sin of the ancestors, thus making its effects felt in the descendants in a natural way.

<sup>3</sup> Gal. 1:24.

**MARY'S COOPERATION IN THE SACRIFICE OF THE CROSS**

This form of Mary's cooperation can be described, clearly and unequivocally, by consistently using the characteristic language of the Sacred Scriptures and the Fathers. It is thus expressed: the redemption of the world is effected, or the grace of salvation was obtained, by the blood of the Lamb as the ransom or purchase price, and by the murmur of the Dove as a prayer which is sanctified by the Holy Ghost, and offered in the name of the redeemed for the acceptance of the ransom; or also, on the one hand, it is the activity of the head and the authority of the priest, on the other, the disposition of the heart and the supplication of the bride.

The murmur of the Dove came from a heart which itself was a spiritual sacrifice through loving participation in the life of the Lamb, and which therefore co-sacrificed itself for the salvation of the world, thus making its prayer a prayer of sacrifice. Because of this we might be tempted to speak of a double sacrifice whereby the world was redeemed. That, evidently, would give occasion to a great misunderstanding, especially when the coordinate position is not expressly excluded. Therefore it must be pointed out that only Christ's sacrifice, as being in itself complete corporally and extrinsically, is a sacrifice which is complete and independently effective. Mary's sacrifice, being purely affective, is united with that of Christ obviously as a secondary and accompanying sacrifice only, like the unbloody and incidental sacrifices which, according to the ritual of Moses, accompany the bloody. Or rather, since Mary's sacrifice consists entirely and formally in a loving co-suffering, hers is a reflection of His.

At any rate, because of her activity in conjunction with Christ's act of redemption, or joining and accompanying it, Mary can be called cooperatrix of the Redeemer but not coredemptrix, because she herself in no way gives or provides the price of redemption. In this respect, with Dionysius the Carthusian<sup>4</sup> and St. Alphonsus Liguori<sup>5</sup> we can call her only salvatrix and consalvatrix.

This idea is expressed beautifully by Arnold of Bonneval (twelfth century). This much-quoted passage reads: "You see in that temple two altars, one in the breast of Mary, the other in the body of Christ; Christ sacrificed His flesh, Mary her soul. She wished to add her blood to the blood of His soul and body, to celebrate with her Son, with hands up-raised on the cross, His evening sacrifice, and to consummate with our Lord Jesus the mystery of our redemption by the death of her body. But it was the sole privilege of the high priest to bring the tribute of blood into the holies, and this distinction could be shared with no one else. In the reparation of mankind no angel or man could have this authority in common with Him. Nevertheless, this disposition of the mother cooperated much, in its own way, to propitiate God, since the charity of Christ presented to the Father His own as well as His mother's prayers and desires; for what the mother asked, the Son approved, and the Father granted. The Father loved the Son and the Son the Father, but the mother burned with love for both. It was one thing that the different offices sought, that the good Father, the loving Son, and the holy mother intended, that love devised for all.

<sup>4</sup> Dionysius Carthus., *De dignitate et laudibus B.M.V.*, I, 23 (Tournay edition of 1908, XXXVI, 99).

<sup>5</sup> St. Alphonsus Liguori, *Glorie di Maria*, Vol. II, discourse 6.

At the same time piety, love, and goodness embraced each other, the mother supplicating, the Son preventing, the Father propitiating. The Son regarded the breast and heart of the mother, the Father the cross and wounds of the Son. What would not be moved amid these many pledges, what would this school of holiness teach save only piety, what character would save only mercy? Love, holiness, and goodness could not relish anything contrary to themselves. It was fitting that nothing should withstand them or oppose their harmony. It was entirely proper that supplication, sanctification, and clemency came together in the interest of rectitude.”<sup>6</sup>

These same thoughts are expressed in shorter form by the same writer in a little work, *De laudibus s. matris Christi Mariae*. In this work he adds: “Doubtless there was one will between Christ and Mary, and both at the same time offered to God one sacrifice, the one in the blood of her heart, the other in the blood of His body.”<sup>7</sup> But the one sacrifice is thought of only as the fusion of two sacrifices into one, and both are kept so separate that a special altar corresponds to each.

Although Arnold of Bonneval does not regard Mary’s sufferings as a bloody sacrifice, yet, on the analogy of the bloody sacrifice, he has before him the expression of Sacred Scripture, regarding the sword which shall pierce Mary’s soul.<sup>8</sup> On the other hand, he loses the analogy of the unbloody, incidental sacrifice accompanying the bloody sacrifice of the Mosaic law, which presents the only and really fitting ritual type of the double sacrifice.

<sup>6</sup> Arnold of Carnot, *De verbis Domini sermo 3; de verbo: Ecce Filius tuus; PL, CLXXXIX, 1694.*

<sup>7</sup> *PL, CLXXXIX, 1726.*

<sup>8</sup> Luke 2:35.

Being unbloody, this sacrifice does not show an independent character of propitiation, and, as it is destroyed only by fire, it constitutes, according to its form, a purely spiritual sacrifice. As to its significance, since it is taken from a lower order of beings, it expresses a real subordination to the animal sacrifice, and when it consists of human food, it indicates at the same time a participation in the fruits of the bloody sacrifice. Very tactfully Arnold of Bonneval avoids calling Mary a priestess. He lets Mary's sacrifice be offered to God by Christ, and expressly excludes her participation in the authority of the high priest.

Although this idea of Mary's cooperation with Christ in the work of redemption is in itself justified, it must be joined with another thought, more complete and profound, and yet equally clear, with which the Church provides us. The latter links Mary's bridal cooperation, accompanying Christ's act of redemption, in a close organic union with her motherhood as well as with Christ's own activity. Thus, the activity of Bridegroom and bride appear, not as next to each other, but as in each other. This presentation follows of itself, if the act of redemption is viewed as an outward sacrifice. And here it comes out most clearly, if the sacrifice is regarded more closely in its hieratical form, allowing of course for the participation of a greater number, which indeed it demands for its full integrity, since their activity intrinsically belongs to the perfection of the sacrificial action.

This idea presents Mary's cooperation in the act of redemption as follows: In the sacrifice of redemption, of which Christ's flesh was the object and matter, Mary was the representative of mankind for whom it is celebrated and consummated. In the proper and full meaning of the

word, she cooperated as co-offerer and she co-celebrated the sacrifice as hers. And since the sacrifice was offered in this manner, it proceeded completely from mankind and belonged to mankind.

This cooperation in the sacrifice was possible only in the case of the mother of the Redeemer, but in her case was also required on the part of God and was invoked by Christ. It showed itself in a threefold manner: (1) With a view to the consummation of the sacrifice of redemption, Mary presented Christ the offering from her own flesh and blood, and under the influence of the Holy Ghost she produced and nourished this as her fruit. (2) With the same purpose she co-disposed of the offering, emanating from her or given her by God, as of her own fruit and possession, and dedicated it to God as a sacrifice. (3) In the actual dedication of Christ in His redeeming death, she cooperated also by her consent as *tradens in mortem*. By self-abnegation in will and feeling, or by a *consensus sententiae et sensus*, she participated in the consummation of the sacrifice, so that Christ's sufferings were in the fullest sense her sufferings also. It is obvious that these three factors are connected mutually and most intimately. They are directed to each other and react on each other. They can be taken together in the idea of *consensus* in the sacrifice of Christ, or *traditio* and *cooblatio per consensum*. The first is especially present at the moment of Christ's conception, the second in the offering of Christ in the temple, the third in Mary's presence beneath the cross. Only the second and third actions can be regarded as formal and exterior sacrificial functions. The dedication of Christ in the temple is clearly marked as a formal sacrificial ceremony by the ritual itself, as well as by the

spirit of the law which was thereby fulfilled, and by the incidental prophecy of Simeon. But in connection with this, Mary's presence under the cross appears as a sacrificial action; for, inspired and upheld by the Holy Ghost, she offered to God her Son hanging on the cross as co-offered by herself, and His sufferings as shared by her for the salvation of the world.

Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac was the specific prototype of this sacrificial activity of Mary, in regard to its form, object, and power. In the obedience of faith Abraham offered up his only son, whom he had received in a wonderful manner. Thereby he merited the sanction of the promise, that by his son, saved from death, he would become the father of many nations.<sup>9</sup> In sacrificing Christ, Mary did nothing less, but incomparably more and, therefore, exercised no less a sacrificial activity. Abraham's sacrifice was no greater than was hers in the presentation in the temple, where the offering of her Son appears an equally independent sacrifice as the sacrificee of Isaac. If she did not make the offering as independently as Abraham, it is not that the latter did more, but because the object of his sacrifice was so dependent on him that he could dispose of it in the first place. But Mary could dispose of her Son only in a secondary manner, together with Himself, by consenting to His sacrifice. Even apart from the infinite difference in value between the presentation in the temple and the actual consummation of the sacrifice, this circumstance itself indicates that the character of Mary's sacrificial action is not adequately represented

<sup>9</sup> Gen. 22:1–19. Abraham offered Isaac in the same place, on the same mountain, where Mary dedicated her Son. The Sacred Scriptures do not state that the mount of Gen. 22:2 is the mountain on which later the temple was built (II Par. 3:1). Such, however, is Jewish tradition.

by the sacrifice of Abraham. For the prototype of the sacrificing Abraham lacks the double relation of the offerer to a people for whom the sacrifice is offered, and to the priest by whom the sacrifice is offered.

This double relation, and also Mary's entire position toward the sacrifice of redemption, is self-evident in the prototype of the public Mosaic sacrifice. In this sacrifice the functions of the laity, consisting in the bringing of the sacrificial victim, were strictly separated from those of the priest, which consisted in the carrying out of the sacrifice. Between both a double mediation took place, by the heads of the families or the elders representing the people who brought the sacrifice, and by the assistants of the priests, the Levites.

Corresponding to this prototype, Mary stands to Christ as high priest, on the one hand, in the capacity of head member of the people, as the representative of the people in the presentation of the offering, on the other, in the capacity of Christ's bride and the instrument of the Holy Ghost, as the partner of the high priest in the function of offering the sacrifice in a holy manner. Not that she herself dedicated the offering or offered the sacrifice by her action; but, through her supernatural ordination and full powers, she co-disposed of the offering presented by her, and co-offered the sacrifice offered by Christ as her own sacrifice. In the language of the Church, Mary can be called the public and sacred *ministra* of the sacrifice of Christ or briefly the deaconess at Christ's sacerdotal sacrifice, because of the analogy of the *ministri* or *liturgi* in the sacrifice of the Church.

This latter analogy is indeed the most perfect that can be used here. For the deacon is at the same time the

representative of the people and the ordained assistant of the priest. In the first capacity he bears the material for the sacrifice to the priest, in the second he supports the priest in the offering of the chalice and serves him after the consummation of the sacrifice in the distribution of the sacrificial food, and thus the latter function finds its reason in the former. In like manner, a real cooperation in Christ's sacrifice belongs to Mary, a cooperation which forms part also of the subjective integrity of the sacrificial action, without the least damage to the independence and hegemony of Christ's sacrificial activity.

Finally, Mary's cooperation in Christ's sacrifice attains its complete hieratical meaning in this, that her soul or her heart must be regarded as the living altar, built in and from mankind. On and in this altar the offering of Christ, which came from her flesh or her womb, is offered by the fire contained therein as in the true altar in such a manner that she herself appears as equally filled and touched by this fire, and that she belongs also to the objective integrity of Christ's sacrifice, that is to say, to the concrete form in which, by God's decree, it must be consummated.

In this way, by Mary's mediation Christ as offering appears not only as sacrificed by and from mankind, but also as sacrificed in mankind, in such a way that He lives in mankind and the latter, on its part, is co-sacrificed in a living manner in Him by a loving participation of His suffering. Likewise, in the capacity of sacerdotal offerer, Christ appears not only as offering Himself in Himself, but also, through Mary's mediation, as offering Himself in mankind, and mankind in Himself.

In the meantime Mary's passive co-offering is con-

tained in her effective union with Christ's sacrifice, whereby she bears this in her heart. When this expression is fully understood, it portrays Mary's relation to the sacrifice of redemption as richly and profoundly as the term *deifera* marks her personal worthiness and position.<sup>10</sup> The expression is not in technical use, but its meaning can be understood from the following. In general the Fathers compare Mary with the ark of the covenant, as seat and throne of God and as the place containing the manna and the tables of the law. Likewise, they particularly and frequently compare her with the throne of propitiation and grace above the ark of the covenant, the *propitiatorium*, and call her with predilection "the living *propitiatorium*."<sup>11</sup> Hereby they do not in the figure distinguish the ark from the cover, nor differentiate in Mary her bodily from her spiritual activity as mother from that of bride. They apply the whole figure directly to her womb. But it is in the intrinsic consequence of the figure and of the very matter, that a distinction is made between these elements without breaking their organic connection, or that, apart from her womb, her soul also, in which Christ lived in a most special way, is brought into connection with the figure. In that way, bearing Christ in her heart and feeding Him with her blood, Mary is the counterpart of the ark of the covenant. Bearing Him in her heart at the shedding of His blood and sprinkled with His sacrificial blood at its shedding, she is the counterpart of the throne of propitiation.

It is evident that the name, "bearer of a sacrifice," not

<sup>10</sup> Now Mary is called *θεοφόρος*, bearer of God, again *θυηφόρος*, bearer of a sacrifice. See Vol. I, chap. 10 of this work.

<sup>11</sup> See Vol. I, chap. 2.

only completes but also embraces the idea of offerer or deaconess of the sacrifice, and with it includes the "altar of sacrifice." The same comprehensive meaning can be given to the expression, *propitiatorium*, when by it we understand the agent of propitiation and of the sacrifice of propitiation assisting the priest. Both functions of Mary, which are here taken together, stand out clearly, the first in the presentation in the temple in Mary's arms, the second in her presence at the foot of the cross. Their outward form and inward power are reflected at the same time in the fact that Mary bears Christ's priestly self-sacrifice above and within her, as the heart sustains the head, and she also cooperates and shares the suffering of that offering, as the heart shares with the head.

It is evident that the participation of the mother of the Redeemer in Christ's redeeming sacrifice, as here described, differs from every other participation which other human beings can exercise by taking part in the enduring or offering of Christ's sufferings. The difference lies in the intimacy of participation and therefore also in its power. Because of its intimacy, Mary's participation forms one whole with Christ's activity, so that, according to the divine plan, Christ acts as little apart from and without her as she can act apart from and without Him. But for that very reason all effects of His sacrifice must be regarded as effected and obtained conjointly by her in and through this sacrifice. Therefore, we can say that Mary with Christ, that is, by her cooperation with Him, gave satisfaction to God for sin, merited grace, and thus redeemed the world, because of the fact that she shared in giving and providing the ransom. But we may say this only with the express modification, in Christ and

through Christ, or also in and through Christ's sacrifice, in so far as she shared in offering this sacrifice with Him.

In this sense and under this form we can rightly and unequivocally call the Mother of the Redeemer a co-redemptrix, especially if thereby we further present her as deaconess to the priest and as the altar of sacrifice, or as the bearer of a sacrifice. In this way her subordination to Christ and her connection with Him are clearly expressed. And her specific activity is presented not as one which confers value and power on Christ's sacrifice, or completes its value and power by a second sacrifice, but as one which communicates to mankind the power and possession of the one sacrifice of Christ. But the idea of coredemptrix becomes confused and obscured, and Mary's complete subordination to Christ, her true connection with Him, and her specific activity are not made sufficiently clear, if in her capacity as co-offerer Mary is called priestess and even high priestess or co-priestess. Especially is this so if, apart from the sacrifice of Christ, a sacrifice of her own is ascribed to the priestess, even though but an unbloody and secondary one, which was united with that of Christ to form one holocaust. If Mary is thus called priestess next to Christ and in contrast with the other redeemed, her priesthood is seen not as a lay priesthood, but as a hierarchical priesthood, and her sacrificial function as one of offering and consecrating. It is true that, apart from and next to Christ, there is still another hierarchical priesthood, but only under the form of Christ's representative. But Mary's role in Christ's sacrifice bears no more the mark of a representative of Christ, than it does of a consecration of the offering.

If, according to what has been already said, it is permissible to speak of two sacrifices, one main and the other a by-sacrifice, this would no longer hold good if she who offers the second sacrifice is called priestess. For in that case the second would be presented as complete in itself and thus as a completion of the powers of the main sacrifice. Therefore, if we wish to call Mary *coredemptrix*, we must be on our guard against qualifying her as priestess or as co-priestess. Thereby Mary would be elevated to an assistant of Christ, in the sense of a support, and thus also the very name would lose its value.<sup>12</sup> Instead of the title of priestess and co-priestess, we may, without fear of ambiguity, use the expression minister or co-minister, which becomes self-evident if Eccl. 24:14 is applied to Mary. Liturgical minister indicates, in general, the public office of the sacrificial service and, therefore, is applied to the deacon and the priest alike. In early Christian usage it prevailed as a specific title for the deacon, in distinction to that of the priest and high priest.<sup>13</sup>

Very little is found in the Fathers relative to the meaning and essence of Mary's co-sufferings as here treated.<sup>14</sup> Later on, Mary's unique position in Christ's sufferings was often said to consist in this, that Mary alone remained steadfast in her faith, and for the reason that she not only represented the faith of the Church in an exceptional manner, but also that she alone constituted the living

<sup>12</sup> The Holy Office recently condemned the devotion to Mary *Virgin Priest*, a devotion that was propagated by some theologians. See E. Dubanchy, art. "Maria," in *Dict. de théol. cath.*, IX, 2397; also Bittremieux, *Marialia*, pp. 142 f.

<sup>13</sup> Pseudo-Dionysius, *De ecclesiast. hierarch.*; PG, III, 425, 508. Ιεπέις stands for priest, ιεράρχης for high priest.

<sup>14</sup> Some have even misjudged Mary's heroic virtue in her sufferings.

Church. For extrinsic and intrinsic reasons this must be traced to the fact that in Mary alone faith was in no way weakened or obscured.<sup>15</sup>

Among the more ancient Fathers, St. Ambrose repeatedly pointed out the loftiness of the mother of the Redeemer, standing at the foot of the cross, and especially in two homonymous texts, to which also Arnold of Bonneval refers.<sup>16</sup> St. Ambrose writes: "Whereas the apostles fled, Mary stood beneath the cross and viewed with loving eyes the wounds of her Son, because she was looking forward, not to the death of the guaranty, but to the salvation of the world. Or perhaps, because she saw the redemption of the world in the death of her Son, she thought that she as royal court could add something to the service of the people by her own death. But Jesus did not need a helper to redeem all, because He created all without a helper."<sup>17</sup> These words do not speak of any relation of Mary's compassion to the salvation of the world, neither do they exclude it. They refer only to a completion of Christ's sacrificial death by a second and bloody death.

A more thorough elucidation and stressing of Mary's compassion was given especially by St. Bernard, in the beautiful words at the end of his sermon *De duodecim stellis*, in which he describes the martyrdom of the Virgin as the twelfth star in the crown.<sup>18</sup> Again by Arnold of Bonneval and still more emphatically on several occa-

<sup>15</sup> See Trombelli, *Mariae ss. vita ac gesta*, Vol. I, disp. 38.

<sup>16</sup> *PL*, CLXXXIX, 1731.

<sup>17</sup> St. Ambrose, *in Luc.*, no. 132; *PL*, XV, 1837, and *Epist. 63 ad Vercell. eccl.*, no. 110; *PL*, XVII, 1218.

<sup>18</sup> St. Bernard, *Sermo de 12 praerogativis*; *PL*, CLXXXIII, 437; see Roman Breviary, 2nd nocturn in festo Septem Dolorum, Fer. VI post Dom. Pass. and September 15.

sions by St. Bonaventure,<sup>19</sup> until the hymn *Stabat mater dolorosa*, written by Jacopone in the spirit of St. Bonaventure, determined for all times the lofty figure of the Mother of Sorrows.<sup>20</sup> St. Antoninus, St. Bernardine of Siena, and St. Peter Canisius have treated this matter profoundly and thoroughly.<sup>21</sup> Since the feast of the Dolors of Mary was sometimes called *Festum spasmi B. Virginis*, and because of the church of *S. Mariae de spasmo* in Jerusalem, there arose in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries an animated dispute over the question whether a *spasmus*, that is, a prostration or impotence from excess of grief, could be admitted in Mary. Cardinal Cajetan entered the list against it in a special work.<sup>22</sup> Others followed up the spurious writings of St. Anselm, St. Bernard, and St. Bonaventure, and, with certain restrictions, conceded the admissibility and probability of a swoon. This matter is thoroughly discussed by Quaresimus.<sup>23</sup>

A swoon accompanied by convulsions in the body and a suspending of the use of the intellect in the soul is

<sup>19</sup> See note 6 of this chapter; St. Bonaventure, *Lignum vitae*, no. 28, and *Vitis mystica*, chap. 9 (edited by Quaracchi, VIII, 78 f., 174 f.). See also *Stimulus amoris*, p. I, c. 3 (edited by Vives, XII, 638 f.). This work is not from St. Bonaventure, but is compiled principally according to his style, probably by the Friar Jacob of Milan. See edit. Quaracchi, VIII, 61.

<sup>20</sup> The *Stabat* is probably not from Jacopone da Todi; see Wilmart, *Auteurs Spir. et textes dévots du moyen-âge latin* (Paris, 1932), pp. 508 f.

<sup>21</sup> St. Antoninus, *Summa*, p. 4, tit. 15, c. 41; St. Bernardine of Siena, *Sermo 2 de gloriose nomine Mariae*; St. Peter Canisius, *De virg. Deip.*, IV, 98.

<sup>22</sup> Cajetan, *De spasmo B.M.V.* in *Opusc. omnia* (Lyons, 1588), II, tract. 13, 180 f.

<sup>23</sup> Pseudo-Anselm, *Dialog. de passione Domini* (*PL*, CLIX, 282-87), of no value; Pseudo-Bernard, *De lamentatione Virg.*; *PL*, CLXXXII, 1138; Pseudo-Bonaventure, *Meditationes vitae Christi*, cap. 79; edited by Vives, XII, 607; this seems to be the Franciscan Joannes de Caulibus, see D. A. Wilmart, *Auteurs spirituels et textes dévots du moyen-âge latin* (Paris, 1932), p. 509, no. 2; Franc. Quaresimus, *Historica, theologica et moralis Terrae Sanctae elucidatio*, lib. 6, peregrin. 6, cap. 11; II (Antwerp, 1639), 209-29.

altogether inadmissible. This would not be consistent with Mary's fullness of grace. Mary's sorrows were undoubtedly so great that they could really have caused her death, to say nothing of a physical collapse. A priori, therefore, it could indeed be admitted that a temporary stiffening of the body or a disorder in the nervous system might have taken place, as a result of which Mary needed the support of others to keep her from falling. For there is nothing uncommon in this, nor is it a sign of weakness. Jesus' fall under the burden of the cross presents rather an analogy for it. But, because of that significant *stabat* of the Gospels and because of the mission which Mary had to fulfill in the completion of Christ's sacrifice, a swoon accompanied by a physical weakness is inadmissible in her case at least.<sup>24</sup>

As a rule, the significance of Mary's compassion is looked for in many moral factors. Thus Mary, in the name of the redeemed, must render the Redeemer in His sufferings the honor and gratitude which is due to Him. To all she must be an example of suffering, especially of innocent suffering and grateful compassion with Christ. As in His glory, so also she must share in the sufferings of the Savior in a unique way, and thereby complete her personal merits. By her sufferings she was to become the merciful solace of all those who suffer.

We come nearer the mediatorial significance of Mary's compassion, if we say that by her compassion she merited the privilege of distributing later among men the graces of the redemption in a more abundant measure by her prayers. Besides Arnold of Bonneval, St. Rupert had given

<sup>24</sup> John 19:25; see Faber, *op. cit.*, chaps. 1-2.

a more profound idea,<sup>25</sup> in which he pictures Mary's compassion as similar to the pains of childbirth in which Mary, with Christ, gave birth to the children of grace. Likewise St. Albert the Great sees in her compassion a privilege which is proper only to her and which he designates as the communication of Christ's passion. For that reason Mary appeared as the assistant of the redemption, and because of that she herself became the mother of all *per recreationem*. By reason of her compassion the world is bound to a sense of gratitude toward her analogous in a manner to its gratitude to Christ for His sufferings.<sup>26</sup> Later these words have often been quoted, without carrying through the basic thought of a "companion who by consent co-operates in His passion."

When, according to St. Albert the Great<sup>27</sup> (St. Richard of St. Lawrence and St. Antoninus), the text from Isaias is quoted against "assistant of the redemption"<sup>28</sup> ("I have trodden the winepress alone, and of the Gentiles there is not a man with me"), it may seem like a play on words to retort that here it is said only: "there is not a man with me," and not "there is not a woman with me." The words, however, bear a profound significance. The words "there is not a man with me" formally exclude, in Christ's case, only the support of a partner in the fight, co-ordinate with Him and fighting in the same way alongside of Him, who, like Christ Himself, sheds his blood in the fight, or gains the victory by his blood. On the other hand, the woman

<sup>25</sup> Rupertus Tuitensis, *in Joan.* lib. 13; *PL*, CLXIX, 789.

<sup>26</sup> St. Albert the Great, *Mariale*, Resp. ad q. 148; edited by Jammy, XX, 105.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, XX, 102.

<sup>28</sup> Isa. 63:3.

associated with Christ in His sufferings occupies, even as such, a subordinate position, and does not cooperate, therefore, by the shedding of her blood but only by sharing in Christ's own sufferings.

The question is touched upon almost as briefly by Salmeron.<sup>29</sup> On this occasion, so far as we know, he is the first to use the title of co-redemptrix, unless—and this we have been unable to ascertain—St. Bernardine of Siena used it before him.<sup>30</sup> The latter, in a comprehensive, profound, and sublime manner, developed the significance of Mary's compassion (in connection with the idea that "her consent to the incarnation" was "consent to the crucifixion"), and also her maternal cooperation in bringing forth the children of God, comprehended in that "consent." On this is based the explanation found in Castelplanio.<sup>31</sup>

In applying Abraham's sacrifice to Mary's sacrificial activity, preachers and ascetics follow the example of St. Antoninus<sup>32</sup> and appeal to St. Anselm, in whose genuine works, however, the text in question is hard to find. They like to say that, as Mary excelled Abraham in obedience, she was prepared to put her Son on the cross with her own hands for the salvation of the world. But, after all, this thought is unnecessary for the emphasizing of the perfection of Mary's spirit of sacrifice, let alone of her

<sup>29</sup> Salmeron, *Commentarii in Evangelia et Actus*, III, tract. 43.

<sup>30</sup> The idea is certainly to be found in St. Bernardine of Siena; see Dublanchy, art. "Maria," in *Dict. de th. cath.*, IX, 2392 f., who does not cite the word in question there or in 2400 or 2436 f.

<sup>31</sup> In recent times, except by Castelplanio, the doctrine has been developed by Ventura, Faber, and Jeanjacquot, mostly without the strict hierarchical idea or at least without its faulty application. See Castelplanio, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, chaps. 8, 11, 18.

<sup>32</sup> St. Antoninus, *Summa*, p. 4, tit. 15, c. 14; edited at Verona, 1740, p. 1227.

sacrificial activity; for this perfection, as with Christ Himself, required only a voluntary surrendering or abandonment to death. Therefore this thought should not be stressed unduly since it can with difficulty be reconciled with maternal love, especially for such a Son, and would only serve to wound unnecessarily tender Christian hearts.

The relation of prototype in which Abraham stands to Mary, though brought out little or not at all by the Fathers, is surprisingly clear and beautiful, not only in the sacrifice of Isaac, but in its entire providential position. The fact that Abraham was a man and not a woman affects the figure no more than does the fact that the ecclesiastical priesthood is exercised by men proves an obstacle to regarding it as an ectype for Mary. For, from both sides, the fatherhood, based on the supernatural cooperation of God, bears a maternal character, and vice versa, the virginal motherhood of Mary, not subordinate to a created fatherhood, possesses a paternal character.

The Apostle<sup>33</sup> indeed uses the sacrifice of Isaac by Abraham as a figure of Christ's surrender by God the Father, to represent God's love for men. But in so doing, the application to Mary is not excluded, but rather included; for, together with God the Father, Mary surrenders their common Son. The typical significance of Abraham in its reference to God the Father is here exhausted so little that, in its concrete form, the prototype is far less applicable in this case than in Mary's. For on the part of God the Father, the surrendering does not take place in the form of obedience and of a sacrifice, and as a meritorious deed.

Prototypes of Mary, acknowledged by the Church, are

<sup>33</sup> Rom. 8:32; cf. Gen. 22:16.

Judith and Esther, not from the viewpoint of an outward sacrifice, but from that of a propitiating intercession, and of the giving up of one's own life, or of one's own soul,<sup>34</sup> as the Jews expressed it, with the purpose of obtaining, through victory over the enemy, the deliverance of the people to whom the bringer of the sacrifice himself belongs. Both these prototypes mutually complete each other. Judith exposed herself to danger of death by cutting off the head of her people's enemy. She is a prototype of Mary who, in the protovangelium, is prophesied as the one who, in the fight, would crush the head of the serpent. Esther exposed herself to the danger of death by beseeching the king to spare her people and to make its enemy powerless. She is a prototype of Mary who intercedes with God for mankind by the sorrows of her soul.

Here the expression used in the epistle on the feast of the Seven Dolors of Mary is very applicable: "Thy praise shall not depart out of the mouth of men . . . for whom thou hast not spared thy life, by reason of the distress and tribulation of thy people, but hast prevented our ruin in the presence of our God."<sup>35</sup> This is emphasized by the words, "thou hast not spared thy life," which characterize very well the anguish of the mother's soul in the sacrifice of her Son. For the Son is the soul of the mother in so far as her whole life is wrapt up in Him, and also because the Jews speak of the soul as of the only child of him to whom it belongs.<sup>36</sup>

In modern times the expression, priestess, is used much in orations. That it has the stamp of the Fathers, is claimed

<sup>34</sup> Judith 13:25; cf. Esther 7:3.

<sup>35</sup> Judith 13:22-25, as Epistle on the feast of the Seven Dolors (Feria VI post Dom. Pass. and Sept. 15).

<sup>36</sup> Ps. 21:21; 34:17.

by an appeal to St. John Damascene, or rather Theodore of Studium, and Epiphanius junior.<sup>37</sup> But instead of the title, priestess, they use "bearer of a sacrifice," an expression common to all persons who actively participate in the sacrifice. Epiphanius says, "She is called priestess and altar at the same time." These words disturb the grammatical construction of the text. They seem to be only a comment on the words of the text: "Mary is the treasure of the Church who received the great mystery and presents us the heavenly bread, Christ." At any rate, he had in mind only an analogy of Mary to the Church's priesthood. But even this analogy between Mary's functions and those of the priesthood by no means justifies her being called priestess. For this title is due to the priesthood of the Church, not so much because it exercises a ministry similar to that of Mary, but principally, because of its power to bless and consummate the sacrifices which are based on the representation of Christ and are analogous to His authority. Since Mary's function is not a formal representation of Christ, it appears, next to and under Christ, more as a diaconate than as a priesthood. To emphasize the outstanding loftiness of Mary's hierarchical dignity and power, we must further explain the fact that, in connection with Christ's personal sacrifice, her diaconate contains a higher dignity and a closer union with Him than does the representative priesthood in the renewal of His sacrifice. In connection with Mary's participation in Christ's bloody sacrifice, the name of priestess is used for the first time by St. Albert the Great from

<sup>37</sup> Pseudo-John Damascene (== Theodorus Studita), *Or. 2 in nativ.*, no. 7; PG, XCVI, 693. E. Huzon (*La Vierge-Prêtre*, Paris, 1912, pp. 10 f.) quotes the text as being from St. John Damascene. Pseudo-Epiphanius, *De laudibus B.M.*; PG, XLIII, 497.

whom St. Antoninus borrowed it.<sup>38</sup> Theologians did not use the expression at all.

Though Mary's cooperation did not conjointly effect the intrinsic power of the redeeming sacrifice, and did not essentially belong to the essence and substance of the actual work of redemption, it should not for that reason be regarded as a purely ornamental and accidental act. As it is joined with Christ's activity to form one organic whole, it was so embodied by God in His plan for the economy of the redemption. Therefore it belongs to the substantial and essential integrity of the redeeming action, in a manner analogous, not similar, to Christ's actions which preceded the sacrifice on the cross.

The analogy to Christ's own sacrificial activity is most significant for that of Mary. Christ's whole life formed one great sacrificial action. On the cross it obtained its completion. It is likewise virtually or radically comprised in His dedication of the sacrifice, which Christ accomplished when He came into the world. Hence His whole sacrificial activity is only a development of this first act, and the Apostle could add: "In the which will we are sanctified."<sup>39</sup>

This whole relationship can be applied also in the case of Mary, so that her maternal consent to the incarnation

<sup>38</sup> St. Antoninus, *Summa*, p. IV, tit. 15, c. 3, Verona, 1740, p. 926: *sacerdotissa justitiae* St. Albert the Great is not indicated here, but chap. 16, p. 1017, reads: *Licet autem beatissima virgo sacramentum ordinis non reperitur, quidquid tamen dignitatis vel gratiae in ipso confertur, de hoc plena fuit*. This sentence is found literally in St. Albert's *Mariale*, q. 43 (edited by Jammy, XX, 42). Scheeben points also to the *Biblia Mariana* which are found in the same volume of St. Albert's works. That work is certainly not from him, but probably from Christianus Lilienfeld (see Genevois, *La bible Mariale . . . , Saint-Maximin*, 1934, p. 26).

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Heb. 10:5-10.

of the Logos was not merely an abstract consent to the existence of the Redeemer, but concrete as to the existence of the Redeemer who must be sacrificed. For, from the prophecies concerning the Redeemer, she undoubtedly knew that the redemption had to be accomplished by a bloody self-oblation on the part of the Redeemer. From this premise it follows that when, as a rule and in view of that consent, the Fathers simply regard and present Mary as a contributory cause to the redemption, they do not exclude, but rather implicitly affirm thereby, her participation in Christ's sacrifice. So, the theological explanation, which later on developed around Mary's sacrificial activity, was merely a consequent development of the ancient doctrine.

Likewise, when the Fathers present Mary, in her consent to the Incarnation, as the very opposite of sinful Eve, they would not thereby imply that this is the only contrast with Eve's disobedience, any more than Christ's obedience, completed on the cross, is the only act in which He is in contrast with the disobedience of Adam. In Christ's case, as in Mary's, it pertained to the very obedience of grace against sin, that a whole life of justice and sacrifice should counteract the one unjust act of the first couple.

The doctrine relative to the co-effecting of our salvation by Mary's cooperation in Christ's sacrifice must be regarded as theologically certain, and not simply as a pious opinion. It results as a consequent development from the teachings of the Fathers, and especially from the Church's idea of the anti-Eve as the one "who crushes the serpent"; and only in this way does the idea find full

expression. It is also backed by texts from the Sacred Scriptures, and by the prototypes, Esther and Judith, which are acknowledged by the Church and used in her liturgy.

## CHAPTER XII

# Mary's Permanent Office as Mediatrix

MARY, THE DEPOSITORY OF CHRIST'S SALUTARY  
MERITS<sup>1</sup>

**F**ROM the explanation given we must conclude that Mary, by her cooperation in Christ's redeeming sacrifice, shared in obtaining, through the same sacrifice, all the graces of salvation for mankind as a whole. Again, by that cooperation she was given charge of all the merits of the redeeming sacrifice, the *virtus passionis Christi*, as the ancient Scholastics expressed it, and in them all graces of salvation for mankind in general. By nature, Mary's co-operation in Christ's sacrifice was so directed and disposed by God as to make this sacrifice, through her cooperation, a complete sacrifice for mankind. Therefore it must be said that only in and through Mary did mankind come into possession of Christ's sacrificial merits. Just as God the Father gave the Redeemer to mankind only through Mary by allowing His Son to become man in her womb, so in like manner did the Redeemer give mankind the merits of His redemption only through Mary; because her soul, as bearer of His sacrifice, was made bearer also of the fruits of that sacrifice for hu-

<sup>1</sup> For literature see Suarez, *De incarn.*, disp. 23; Christoph. Vega, *Theol. Mar.*, pal. 30, cert. 4; Virg. Sedlmayr, *Theologia Mariana*, p. 2, q. 8, and p. 3, q. 2; F. W. Faber, *The Foot of the Cross* (London, 1858), chap. 9; P. Jeanjacquot, *Simples explications sur la coopération de la T. S. Vierge à l'œuvre de la rédemption*, Paris, 1868; Passaglia, *De imm. conc.*, sec. 6, c. 4.

manity in general. Mary's consent to her part in the accomplishing of the Incarnation was an instrumental act, or rather, the mediating act whereby God the Son, given in the first place to her, should be given through her to the rest of mankind also. Likewise, Mary's consent to Christ's sacrifice was not less but rather more of a mediating act, rather, it was the mediating act whereby the merits of the sacrifice were converted to the use of the rest of mankind.

The intrinsic and mutual relation between Mary's co-operation in the sacrifice and her taking mediatorial possession of the entire sacrificial merits for the benefit of humanity is about the same as the relationship: (1) in the sacrifice itself, between the meriting power and the pledging of the good merited; (2) in the altar, between its capacity of bearer of the sacrifice and of bearer of the sacrificial blessing; (3) in the *propitiatorium*, between its capacity of throne of mercy and throne of grace; (4) in human propagation, between the *ministratio materiae* and the *conceptio prolis*; (5) in the heart, between its co-operation with the head, and the communication of the influence of the head to the other members.

It is not a mere rhetorical flourish, but a most profound truth to say that, as she stood beneath the cross, Christ poured forth all His redeeming blood into the heart of the mother from whom He had received it, so that through her, as through a channel, it might flow over all mankind. Again, as *propinatrix salutis* Mary drank first of the chalice of salvation, in order to pass it on to mankind. Further, according to St. Bernard,<sup>2</sup> Mary's soul alone remained in Christ's body after His soul had left it; and,

<sup>2</sup> St. Bernard, *Sermo de 12 praerog.*; *PL*, CLXXXIII, 437.

likewise, in the piercing of His side Mary took up in herself, through the blood and water flowing therefrom, all the power of His redeeming death in order thus to give birth to a new life for mankind. The profound and dogmatic thought of these expressions is reflected in the idea which, although not sufficiently supported by historical evidence or by any intrinsic reason, is nevertheless generally propagated in the Church, namely, that in taking Christ's sacrificial body down from the cross, Mary received it in her bosom. Thus, she appears in reality as the depositary of the sacrificial fruit. At any rate, in this thought lies the only concrete and living expression of the traditional and ecclesiastical idea according to which, in the pouring forth of blood and water from His side, Christ transferred to His Church the merits of His sacrifice for distribution to mankind. For, in her person as mediatrix of redeeming grace, Mary was well-adapted to represent the Church since, of those who stood beneath the cross, no one else could be so considered, the more so since Peter, the head of the Church, was absent. Later on, moreover, in beseeching and in receiving the Holy Ghost,<sup>3</sup> Mary appears among and at the head of the college of the apostles, which formed the nucleus of the Church organism.

This teaching is often based on the words of the dying Savior to Mary and John,<sup>4</sup> as if these words contained the testament in which Christ transferred His merits to His mother, so that, as mother of all men, she might distribute their fruit among them. But the doctrine does not follow from these words with sufficient certainty, neither as to

<sup>3</sup> Acts 1:14; cf. 2:1.

<sup>4</sup> John 19:26.

its full import, nor its perfect form. In reality, the meaning of these words must be deduced from the doctrine, rather than the doctrine from these words. This doctrine is the essential supposition for the complete idea, as generally accepted in the Church, of Mary's spiritual motherhood over all the redeemed.

#### MARY, THE SPIRITUAL MOTHER OF THE REDEEMED

In the work of the redemption, Mary's cooperation is a maternal activity truly productive or generative in the sense that it has as its aim and effect that, by virtue of Christ's merits, the redeemed should be born children of God. For that reason she contributes in obtaining spiritual life for the redeemed as much as an ordinary mother does in obtaining natural life for her children. By her contribution she cooperates with Christ, the spiritual founder of redeemed humanity, in a bridal cooperation as the organic connecting member between Him and His children, and this as closely and efficaciously as a mother cooperates with the father in natural propagation.

By His sufferings Christ, as the father, produces the new mankind, the Church. By His sacrificial death He makes Himself its fertile seed,<sup>5</sup> and from His side He pours into it the efficacy of His sufferings as the sap of the new life. Likewise, by her compassion, Mary, as mother, brought forth the new mankind. By the closest bodily and spiritual union with Christ's sacrifice, she takes up this sacrifice in herself as the seed of the new mankind and helps the rest of men to appropriate its vivifying power. In Christ's case, the salutary activity of His sufferings is all the more a true and perfect paternal

<sup>5</sup> John 12:24.

production, for the reason that, by His sacrificial merits in the pouring out of His blood, He gives forth the divine vital strength which is inherent in Him and which is contained in His divine blood. In Mary's case, the salutary activity of her compassion is a true and perfect maternal production, the more so as by the offering of her own Son, in whom she lived more than in herself, she thus, by the use of her own being and life, communicates to man the life of grace. For that reason also, by her substantial and generating activity she exercises her influence on the re-birth of mankind. Under a form equally efficacious, her maternal production is represented as the vivifying activity of the heart in relation to the other members of the human organism. For although, unlike the heart, Mary does not feed with her own blood the head and the other members, yet she obtains life for them. She communicates it to them in such a way that by the giving of her blood to the head, and by her participation in its use by that head, she causes the vivifying strength received in and by it to descend upon herself and the other members.

Mary is the spiritual mother of men <sup>6</sup> in her capacity as throne of the sun of grace and as the organic link that connects mankind with Christ as its Head; and this capacity is included in her role as Mother of Christ. Therefore Christ's conception must be regarded as the act by which she became both the Mother of Christ and the mother of men. In Christ, His capacity of incarnate Son of God and as essential and supernatural Head of mankind forms the basis and nucleus of His spiritual paternity. In Mary, as the result of Christ's conception, her organic and substantial relation to mankind, in and

<sup>6</sup> See Vol. I, chap. 11.

through Christ, forms the basis and nucleus of her spiritual motherhood. Christ became actually and completely the spiritual father of mankind only by His sacrificial activity culminating in His sacrificial death; because by the shedding of His blood, He, as it were, caused the divine vitality stored in Himself to become available. Likewise, Mary became actually and completely the spiritual mother of mankind only by the fact that, through her participation in Christ's sacrifice, she carried this sacrifice in her heart and made its efficacy to descend upon mankind. Because of her spiritual motherhood, this second maternal activity of Mary bears the true character of a conception, but in relation to the other conception which coincides with that of Christ, it stands in a more limited sense as the bringing forth, that is, the *parturire* or *parere* of the *proles concepta*. From this point of view, Mary's productive activity in her spiritual motherhood appears as a sorrowful birth. Yet this pain differs essentially from that of natural births, which take place under the curse of sin. Mary's sorrows are purely spiritual. They not only accompany the spiritual birth but really effect it, and thus are in themselves fruitful and full of blessing.

The most perfect prototype of Mary's motherhood over the spiritual people of God lies in the manner in which, by the wonderful conception and sacrifice of Isaac, Abraham, according to the flesh, became the father of God's people.<sup>7</sup> There is this notable difference: Abraham's paternal sorrows must be regarded only as merits for the obtaining of a greater posterity; Mary's maternal sorrows were the conception and birth of a spiritual posterity.

<sup>7</sup> Gen. 22:1-18.

In contrast with Christ's own birth, therefore, the spiritual birth of the redeemed, as effected by Mary, appears as a cooperation with Christ, her spiritual Bridegroom and the spiritual Father of the redeemed; and also as a birth most painful because of its specific object. Nevertheless this productive activity of Mary, which forms her spiritual motherhood, can also be understood as meaning that Mary thereby brought forth, not only the redeemed, but also Christ Himself and the redeemed in Christ; in other words, that she cooperated with Christ in the offering of Himself as sacrifice, and this participation in Christ's sacrifice had the specific aim of giving Christ to mankind, through His sufferings, as the perfect principle of salvation.<sup>8</sup>

This idea seems indeed to form the basis for the figure found in the Apocalypse,<sup>9</sup> of the Church rooted in Mary, since "the woman's pains of childbirth" are, in this case, brought into special connection with Christ's birth. It contains also the fact that, from the time she bore Christ in her womb, she bore Him as the mother of sorrows, because she knew Him as the lamb destined for the sacrifice of redemption, and offered Him up with deep anguish of soul.

St. Augustine does not expressly mention this, but it agrees undoubtedly with his idea, if his words, "to co-operate out of charity, in order that the faithful be born in the Church,"<sup>10</sup> are applied to Mary's cooperation in Christ's sacrifice. Upon these words he bases Mary's

<sup>8</sup> Heb. 5:9.

<sup>9</sup> Apoc. 12:1-6.

<sup>10</sup> St. Augustine, *De s. virginitate*, cap. 5-6; *PL*, XL, 399. St. Augustine writes: *cooperari caritate ut fideles in ecclesia nascerentur*. He puts this in contrast to *corporaliter gignere*.

motherhood over Christ's members. He contrasts the phrase, "to cooperate out of charity in order that the faithful be born," with "to bring forth bodily" in relation to Christ, so that the "charity" is represented not only as determining the end but also as fruitful in itself and in its own way; and nowhere is this more the case than in the participation in Christ's sacrifice. This idea relative to Mary's motherhood certainly appears in tradition of fairly recent date.<sup>11</sup> As to the traditional character of this idea in general, what has been said before concerning the significance of Mary's sacrificial activity, holds here also.<sup>12</sup> It finds its scriptural motivation in all that is advanced for Mary's cooperation in the redemption. A formal scriptural argument for Mary's motherhood over mankind, based on her maternal production, is given by the well analyzed text from the Apocalypse in which, after Christ, the redeemed are called "the rest of her seed."<sup>13</sup>

The vision of the beloved disciple of our Lord provides a positive and exegetical reason for applying to Mary's spiritual motherhood over all the redeemed, in a more sublime yet general sense, the words of the Savior: "Woman, behold thy son. Son, behold thy mother."<sup>14</sup> Literally, they do not exclusively contain a recommendation of the mother to the loving care of the son, or an admonition to that son to honor the mother; but they do undoubtedly hold a recommendation of the son to the loving care of the mother which in a higher, more universal sense refer to Mary's spiritual motherhood of the re-

<sup>11</sup> See Bartman, *op. cit.*, pp. 162 f., and Terrien, *La Mère de Dieu et la Mère des hommes* (Paris 1900), III, 244-337.

<sup>12</sup> See preceding chapter.

<sup>13</sup> Apoc. 12:17. About the form of the argument, see Vol. I, chap. 1.

<sup>14</sup> John 19:26.

deemed. Consequently these words must be applied to this latter aspect of her motherhood, in the sense also that they not only signify Mary's appointment to the rights and duties of a foster-mother, but especially contain an explanation of her motherhood based on her cooperation in the sacrifice of the redemption and therefore on her maternal share in the production of the redeemed. Or, by explaining her motherhood, based on her maternal production, they rather express Mary's appointment to the authority and office of a truly maternal solicitude in the care and nourishing of her children.

It would be difficult to draw a real proof for this explanation from these words themselves and from the historical circumstances. The clever manner in which Ventura<sup>15</sup> attempted this is not without value. He shows at least how the more sublime and general meaning links up with the words and the circumstances. Of special interest is the fact that he takes into consideration the addressing of Mary as woman instead of mother, and the indication of John as "the disciple whom Jesus loved" instead of by his name. Among the historical circumstances in which the Savior spoke, the fact can be determined, even apart from His words, that Mary, by her cooperation in the sacrifice of the redemption, became at that time the spiritual mother of the redeemed. If we note this fact, we may conclude with greater probability that, although the Savior wished to appeal to this function of her motherhood, these words do not, for that reason, contain an absolute proof of Mary's universal motherhood. But, once this aspect of her motherhood is premised, it gives a presumptive proof of Christ's will, that Mary

<sup>15</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. I, c. 6.

should care for and nourish the children she received. To that extent it is altogether right for us to conclude from these words, in their ascetical meaning, that Mary should take the redeemed into her care and that they, in turn, should honor Mary and entrust themselves to her protection. From the text from the Apocalypse, and in general from Mary's relation to the Church, it is evident that we can also apply to Mary's spiritual motherhood the beautiful words from Isaias<sup>16</sup> in which, after bitter trials, a supernatural fruitfulness is prophesied for Jerusalem. This much, at least, can be done by way of illustration, but to use these words as a proof would be going too far.

Mary's spiritual and maternal function and position, of which a positive prototype is certainly found in Eve as the mother of the living,<sup>17</sup> must be regarded as in marked contrast with Eve as the mother of sin. Epiphanius<sup>18</sup> unites both forms of this figure in Eve. In this respect, the contrast or the contrasting parallel can be carried through in details in many ways, but especially in regard to the relation between Mary's primary and secondary motherhood. In this latter respect, a complete parallel exists in the contrast between the mother of sin and the mother of grace, in that Eve becomes also the mother of sin in her posterity, or in her descendants as sinners. This is so, because she is the mother of sin in Adam, or of Adam's sin as the principle of sin in mankind, and as such she unites herself with Adam as her bridegroom in the sin of the race. On the other hand, as to

<sup>16</sup> Isa. 53:8 ff.; 66:7 ff.

<sup>17</sup> Gen. 3:20.

<sup>18</sup> St. Epiphanius, *Panarion*, Haer. 78, no. 18; PG, XLII, 728 f.

the position of her physical motherhood, which is connected with and conditions the spiritual, there here exists a reversed relation, in so far as Mary by her physical motherhood is the principle of justice, whereas Eve by her physical motherhood propagates only sin. In union with Christ, Mary's productive activity appears as a sacrificial activity, sorrowful, propitiatory, and sustained by a holy love, as much towards the common sin of the ancestors as towards their physical act of propagation sustained by sensual pleasure and lust. But in relation to the propitiation for sin, Mary's sorrowful productivity forms not less a parallel with that of Eve, whose motherhood belongs to the curse of sin. Even the propitiatory sufferings of the new Adam can be regarded as an assumption of the pains of childbirth, imposed as a punishment for sin. But in the specific condemnation of the man to "labor in the sweat of his brow,"<sup>19</sup> there can be seen also the burden of man in his capacity of father, since by his labors he must provide for the sustenance of his family. This curse of the man is offset by Christ's bloody sweat and His shedding of blood, as Mary's unbloody maternal anguish counterbalances the curse of the woman.

It is evident that Mary's motherhood differs not in degree only, but completely and essentially, from the spiritual motherhood ascribed to other saints, who by their prayer, example, etc., contribute towards the spiritual rebirth of others. In a sense and in a measure incomparably higher, we can apply to Mary what the Apostle says of himself: "If you have ten thousand instructors in

<sup>19</sup> Gen. 3:19.

Christ, yet not many fathers. For in Christ Jesus, by the gospel, I have begotten you.”<sup>20</sup>

Indeed, Mary is the spiritual mother of mankind in a manner still more sublime even than is the Church, in so far as the latter is distinguished from Mary in the fact that it does not contain Mary as its head member or heart. For, although in contrast with the saints, it must be said of the Church, that it not only teaches but also brings forth, Mary is connected yet more closely with Christ, the spiritual father of mankind, and indeed to the extent that she even helped to achieve the union of the Church with Him, and thus is also mother of the Church. Consequently Mary cooperated in a more fundamental way in effecting and obtaining the rebirth of all mankind, whereas the Church is active only in applying the fruits of redemption to the individual soul. However, in so far as Mary is the head member or heart of the Church, her motherhood unites with that of the Church to form one motherhood in the same manner as Christ’s spiritual fatherhood also forms one fatherhood with that of God. But, even in that case, Mary’s motherhood remains the root and soul of that of the Church in such unity that the Church can have and exercises its motherhood only in so far as it contains and acts through Mary’s motherhood.

In general, there exists between Mary’s motherhood and that of the Church so close, complete, and mutual a relation, rather so intrinsic a connection and likeness, that one can be known only in and with the other. The two are connected and resemble each other by the very fact that they depend on the Holy Ghost for their fecundity and life, and are thereby intended to communicate a holy and

<sup>20</sup> I Cor. 4:15.

spiritual life. In both cases, moreover, the spiritual motherhood over the redeemed includes a motherhood over Christ Himself, and indeed owes its perfection to this factor. For, all other maternal functions of the Church center round that by which she brings forth in her womb the Eucharistic Christ as the Head, the sacrifice, and the food of the members of His mystical body. But that very fact reveals very specially the more sublime and fundamental character of Mary's motherhood in comparison with that of the Church, and at the same time the organic connection of the two, as a result of which the Church's maternal activity is exerted because of and by virtue of Mary's motherhood, while Mary carries on her maternal work in and through the Church.

An abundance of practical and theoretical conclusions is attached to the connection and analogy of the motherhood of the Church to that of Mary. The Fathers have emphasized this connection and analogy although, more often than not, in individual points only.<sup>21</sup> By way of example we may note the celibacy of the sacerdotal organs of the Church. In them, as in the bearers of an essentially virginal motherhood, this celibacy is required, not because of an absolutely similar necessity, yet for reasons altogether analogous to Mary's perpetual virginity in soul and body. On the other hand, Mary's relation to the Eucharist is also extremely significant for the full understanding of her spiritual motherhood. First the Mother of God, in a truer and fuller sense than the Church, prepared the flesh and blood of Christ, which are contained

<sup>21</sup> See St. Leo the Great, *Sermo 26 de Nativ. Domini*, c.2; *PL*, LIV, 213. Abundant material is to be found in J. B. Terrien, *op. cit.*, p. II, lib. 8, c.3 (Paris edition, IV, 3-84).

in the Eucharist as the essential spiritual food for her children. Secondly, in the Eucharistic Communion, through Christ's flesh and blood which is taken from herself, she enters into a substantial and organic relation to her children, whereby they become dear to her and obtain a special right to her motherly care and intercession.

An unhealthy mysticism put a fantastic interpretation on Mary's relation to the Eucharist, holding that a real presence of Mary, or a part of her flesh and blood, was contained therein. This part of her flesh and blood, which had gone over to Christ, but remained distinct from His own, would still belong to her and, apart from Christ's flesh, should be venerated by a special cult. That was the teaching, in the seventeenth century, of Christopher Vegas;<sup>22</sup> in the eighteenth century, of Zephyrinus de Someyre.<sup>23</sup>

Guido Carmelita refuted a like error held by some Greek writers who, in the Eucharist, saw "relics of the Blessed Virgin."<sup>24</sup> This doctrine was condemned by Rome as "false, dangerous, and scandalous."<sup>25</sup> A partial renewal of this error occurred in the middle of the nineteenth century. A study in Mariology by a German theologian contained this doctrine, and for that reason was placed on the Index.<sup>26</sup> At best it can be said that the

<sup>22</sup> Christoph. Vegas, *Theologia Mar.*, palaestra 21.

<sup>23</sup> Zephyrinus de Someyre, *Liber de cultu erga Deiparam in sacramento altaris*.

<sup>24</sup> Guido Carmelita, *Summa de haer., de haer. graecorum*, c. 13.

<sup>25</sup> See Benedict XIV (Lambertini), *De servorum Dei beatificatione*, lib. 4, p. 2, c. 31.

<sup>26</sup> A dogmatic study in Mariology by H. Oswald (Paderborn, 1855) was placed on the Index, December 6, 1855.

bodily substance, originally taken from Mary, remained materially identical in Christ's body as His flesh and blood; but even this is pure conjecture. Only the organic connection is certain of Christ's flesh and blood at His death with that of Mary.<sup>27</sup>

Instead of emphasizing a formal, or even a merely material, identity of Christ's flesh and blood with that of Mary's in the Eucharist, the fact should rather be stressed that, by her will, Mary cooperated and still cooperates formally and directly in the preparation of the Eucharist: first, because this, implicitly at least, was her object in the production of Christ's flesh; secondly, because the institution of the Blessed Eucharist can be regarded as accomplished in consideration of her prayers. With this we might associate her intercession at the undoubtedly typical miracle at Cana.<sup>28</sup>

#### MARY'S COOPERATION AFTER CHRIST'S DEATH

On the part of the Redeemer, the work of salvation continues after His death; in order to apply to the individual soul the fruits of that death. Mary likewise continues her cooperation with the same purpose, the more so since, in the very application of the redemption, much room is left for human cooperation. While the Redeemer, reigning on the throne of God, continued His work of salvation no longer as one obtaining and meriting but rather as one commanding and distributing grace; it is obvious that Mary's activity, as long as she was separated

<sup>27</sup> See Dublanchy, art. "Marie," in *Dict. de th. cath.*, IX, 2364 f.

<sup>28</sup> John 2:1-6.

from her Son and continued to labor on earth among redeemed mankind, retained its former characteristic of winning and meriting. It remained that *impetratio*, by which he who prays makes himself and others worthy to obtain grace, possesses a power which is based on a pious longing. Perhaps it is more correct to say that, in relation to the accomplished act of redemption, it had the characteristic of an obtaining or disposing application. The Sacred Scriptures do not give the slightest hint as to the duration and continuance of Mary's salutary activity on earth. They mention only the first, but the most important, exercise of that activity, her prayer among the apostles before the descent of the Holy Ghost.<sup>29</sup>

As for Mary's specific position in the work of redemption after its completion, her function is as natural and significant as was her activity before the conception of the Redeemer. At that time, as an instrument of the Holy Ghost and head member of mankind not yet redeemed. Mary had the task of preparing the latter for the coming of the Redeemer. In the same capacity must she, now as then, work among the redeemed in order to convey to them the grace of redemption and thereby show herself for all time the bearer and mediatrix of the grace of redemption.

In Mary's prayer among the apostles, especially before the descent of the Holy Ghost, we have for all time a figure of the relation between the Church as mediatrix of the grace of redemption and Mary. This relation consists not only in this, that the prayer of the Church on earth is generally animated and supported by that of Mary; but also and especially in the fact that, by virtue

<sup>29</sup> Acts 1:14.

of the formal identity of the Church of all times with the original Church, the prayer for the fruits of the redemption, offered by the Church on earth, is animated and supported by Mary's pious prayer, as a prayer from the heart of the Church, now as much as when Mary formed part of that Church on earth.

The nature and significance of Mary's continued activity on earth comes into evidence more clearly and forcefully when considered from the viewpoint of her spiritual motherhood. In that case her activity at once appears as running concurrently with that fruition by which a physical mother, after the conception of the fruit, cherishes that fruit in her womb in order to bring it to full development. In contrast with the maternal *generare* or *concipere*, this function is called *alere*, or *parturire* and *parere*. In physical motherhood, after the conception of the propagating power from the father, it is the task of the mother to make the germ-cells available for the vivification by the spiritual soul, and to give complete development to the body thus vivified. For that purpose it supports the influence of the soul on the formation of the members, and thus aids in making these into living members; it is, in a manner, within the human organism, analogous to the heart which serves the head in the formation and vivification of the other members. Likewise in Mary the germ-cell of the Church, that is, redeemed mankind, had to be developed into an organic, living, and mystical body. As receiver of the productive power from Christ's sufferings, Mary was able and obliged to make this germ-cell available in her heart for the reception of the Holy Ghost who is the soul of that mystical body. After the reception of the Holy Ghost, she had

to cooperate in the first development of this body by the formation and vivification of its individual members.

The figure of this maternal function of Mary does not limit itself to her activity on earth, but is applicable in general also to her whole maternal care for redeemed humanity; hence it refers likewise to that care which, with Christ, she exercises in heaven. In a physical mother, the type of maternal care she exercises towards the child in her womb is not less the standard for the activity which later, together with the father, she shows in the rearing of the child. In this case the kind of maternal cooperation in the full development of the child presents itself under two forms, the second of which really supposes the first. Likewise it is obvious that, in an analogous manner, this cooperation is realized in Mary's spiritual motherhood under two forms corresponding to those of physical motherhood. From this it follows that the activity exercised by Mary on earth corresponds most specifically in form and effect to that by which, without external relation to the father, but in close union with her child, the physical mother nourishes and cherishes that child in her womb until it is matured for an independent life.

This resemblance goes so far that even the pains of childbirth are not lacking in this maternal care of Mary for the infant Church. These very pains of birth which coincide with those of the Church are indicated particularly in the Apocalypse.<sup>30</sup> This maternal care of Mary naturally includes in a broader sense her being regarded as *paracleta*, that is, protectress, educatrix, and consolatrix of the infant Church. To the apostles, orphaned by His

<sup>30</sup> Apoc. 12:1 ff.

departure to the Father, Christ gave Mary together with the Holy Ghost whose special figure and instrument she is, in order that she might take His place as visible guaranty of His assistance and as mediatrix of His illuminating grace.

Since this idea presents the effective rebirth of the individual redeemed, viewed from the birth that takes place in the members of Christ's mystical body, which is the Church, Mary's spiritual motherhood at once appears as a motherhood over the Church; so that, in its relation to the redeemed person, it is realized by the very motherhood of the Church itself. But for that very reason this idea justifies our saying, that the Church, as mother of the new mankind, at the foot of the cross came forth in such a way from the side of Christ as to be conceived in Mary's heart in order to be born therefrom.<sup>31</sup> This idea also places Mary's spiritual motherhood in closer connection with her physical motherhood towards Christ Himself. On this account Mary's maternal activity toward redeemed humanity is formally directed to this, that by the power of Christ as Head she brings forth the redeemed unto unity with Him "as into the perfect one Christ" in the sense given by the Apostle.<sup>32</sup>

Christ's words from the cross to Mary and John,<sup>33</sup> in their literal sense, indicate a maternal relation to John which had to be established for the duration of Mary's life. In a higher sense they refer also to Mary's maternal relation to the members of Christ's mystical body during

<sup>31</sup> About the Church as daughter of Mary, see Terrien, *op. cit.*, p. II, lib. 8, c. 2; IV, 28-58.

<sup>32</sup> Eph. 4:13.

<sup>33</sup> John 19:26 f.

her life on earth. This holds in particular for the Church which was represented by the apostles. It holds for the apostles also, because they represented the Church as a figure of Mary's virginal motherhood. This was particularly true of St. John. If from this application we pass on to the universal meaning of the words, the latter takes on a richer and more beautiful significance. We can more easily and naturally imagine it as contained in the words themselves, than if, from the literal meaning, we pass directly and immediately to the whole of the faithful.

#### MARY'S COOPERATION IN HEAVEN

Mary exercises her final cooperation with the Redeemer after her Son had taken her to Himself into His heavenly glory. This cooperation is again in immediate union with Christ and will continue until the full number of the redeemed is complete. As "Queen standing at the right hand of her Son,"<sup>34</sup> she shares in His divine activity of salvation in the same way as she cooperated with Him while on earth in obtaining the grace of redemption. Like the activity of Christ Himself and of the glorified saints, or like that of all members of the perfected Church in heaven, among whom it is exercised for the benefit of the yet imperfect Church on earth, Mary's salutary activity consists in intercession. In contrast with the activity of obtaining, or of obtaining and applying, on behalf of the *viatores*, her activity bears the characteristic of a participation in the distribution, *dispensatio*, of God's graces, especially the grace of redemption. For, her activity is the effect of her elevation to the state of reigning with God. In contrast with Christ, her coopera-

<sup>34</sup> Ps. 44:10.

tion in the distribution of grace must, like that of the saints, be limited to a glorious intercession.<sup>35</sup>

It has always been the conviction of the Church that in heaven Mary intercedes in the most comprehensive and irresistible manner for the Church on earth; also, that, according to the doctrine of the Church and the Sacred Scriptures, all glorified saints pray more or less effectually for the Church here below. This follows clearly both from reason in general and from Mary's special relation to Christ because of which, while on earth, she co-operated most earnestly and constantly with Him in the salvation of mankind. As for the nature, position, and power of Mary's intercession in heaven, it is equally obvious that her intercession bears a characteristic entirely its own, distinguishing it no less from that of the saints than from that of Christ. This characteristic can be expressed as follows: it is the maternal intercession in the order of grace, that is, it is purely maternal in contrast with that of Christ, and it is truly maternal in contrast with that of the saints.

As a purely maternal intercession, or as that of the maternal bride, Mary's intercession is to that of Christ as one that is based on the sublime and proper power of God the Son, which is expressed in the full spiritual fatherhood over mankind. Mary is subordinate to this, consequently she pleads and petitions for all that she desires, but only by and in Christ. Thus, in the strictest sense of the word, Christ's intercession is the interpellation

<sup>35</sup> Some theologians wish to ascribe to Mary a physical and instrumental causality with regard to the distribution of grace. See Bittermieux, *De mediatione universalis B.M. Virginis quoad gratias* (Bruges, 1926), pp. 276-83, and B. Lavaud, "De la causalité instrumentale de Marie, médiatrice de toute grâce," in *Revue Thomiste*, XXXII (1927), 423-45.

tion of a king and priest, based on the lofty dignity of His person and the sublime value of His sacrifice. It thus bears the characteristic of a supreme jurisdiction. That of Mary, on the contrary, remains always the ministerial supplication of a deacon.

In relation to the intercession of other saints, Mary's is truly maternal and on an essentially higher plane than theirs. Their intercession is based on their capacity as friends and servants of God. The intercession of the Mother of God the Redeemer, is based on the manifold and unique union of Mary with Christ in His person and in His work, and on her unique capacity of *condomina* and *conliturga*, resultant therefrom.<sup>36</sup> In so far as it is directed to Christ Himself, it is based especially on the services which she alone rendered to His person and, therefore, it possesses the interpellatory characteristics of Christ's mediation. The intercession of the saints is exercised only as an act of friendly interest. That of Mary, as spiritual mother of the redeemed, is such that, in virtue of her vocation as mother, she intercedes with a truly maternal love for the children whom she conceived and brought forth, in order to perfect them in and with her first-born Son as children of God, and thereby to win and possess them also as her children. From this it obviously follows that other saints, in their intercession, are naturally subordinate to Mary, partly because they depend on her intercession or direct their prayer to God and Christ through her, partly because by their intercession they place themselves at the disposal of Mary's maternal direction.

The antiquity of the Church's concept of Mary's inter-

<sup>36</sup> See Vol. I, chap. 11, and this volume, chap. 11.

cession is especially apparent from the so-called orante representations in the catacombs, that is, the pictures of women standing with arms extended. In many of these representations, Mary's name is expressly mentioned, especially when the orante is pictured among the apostles. Among other saints, apart from and next to Mary, St. Agnes is by preference represented as orante, because she was particularly suited to represent the Church as virginal daughter of Mary. Whenever the orante appears alone and without a name, she naturally signifies the Church directly; yet, in such manner that she is either represented as mother of the faithful in Mary herself, or imagined as daughter of Mary.<sup>37</sup>

The analogy of the interpellatory characteristic in the intercession of Mary and Christ was summarized significantly in the Middle Ages in the expression: "The Son shows the Father His side and His wounds, the Mother shows her Son her bosom and her breasts." The expression is a delicate one, hence cannot be used indiscriminately.

It is obvious that in oratorical language, in order to emphasize strongly the contrast between the interpellation of the mother and the simple supplication of the servants, we meet expressions such as the famous text in St. Peter Damian: "Thou approachest before that golden throne of human reconciliation not asking only, but commanding as *Domina*, not as handmaid."<sup>38</sup> Such hyperbolical and metaphorical language can be used only for pious and understanding hearers. With St. Bernardine of

<sup>37</sup> See H. Leclercq, art. "Marie, Mère de Dieu," in *Dict. d'archeol. chrét. et de liturg.*, X (1932), 1982 ff.

<sup>38</sup> St. Peter Damian, or rather Nicholas of Clairvaux, *Sermo 1 de nativ.* B.V.; *PL*, CXLIV, 740.

Siena, perhaps also with St. Bonaventure, we may speak of a jurisdiction which Mary exercises in her intercession. In itself this expression does not mean a special privilege of Mary. To a certain extent it is applicable also to the intercession of all the saints, since their intercession received from God the certain guaranty of realization, and thus is equal to having the disposal of the graces to be distributed. It would mean a special privilege for Mary only when applied, in the sense of St. Bernardine, to an innate and general jurisdiction.<sup>39</sup>

The Greek Fathers use the word *εὐτρέψις* (intercession) for the interpellation of both Christ and Mary; for Mary's intercession they more often use *πρεοβεία*, which means an ambassador's mediation. In this function Mary herself is designated now as "leader of a faction," now as "mediatrix of foreigners," again as "ambassador," but especially is the title "advocate" applied to her. This latter expression is used almost exclusively for Mary, and not for the saints. Because of its broad import and because it is a name of the Sacred Scriptures proper to the Holy Ghost<sup>40</sup> it contains also a special consecration. In this respect it is particularly appropriate to Mary, the more so since, by reason of her special relationship to Him,<sup>41</sup> the Holy Ghost unites Himself to Mary's petition with unutterable sighs.

#### MARY, THE UNIVERSAL MEDIATRIX OF GRACE

In all the forms and phases of her cooperating activity so far elucidated, Mary appears next to and under Christ,

<sup>39</sup> St. Bernardine of Siena, *De salutatione angelica*, a. 1, c. 2, in the edition of *Opera omnia*, by P. Rodulphus, Venice, 1591, I, 386 f. See text quoted by E. Blondeel, *L'influence d'Ubertin de Casale . . .* (Collect. Franc., V, 36, 1935); see also St. Bernardine of Siena, *De nativ. B.V.*, cap. 8.

<sup>40</sup> John 15:26 f.

<sup>41</sup> See Vol. I, chap. 11, and this volume, chap. 9.

as the eminently active and influential mediatrix of salvation, the reason being her unique central position between Christ and mankind,<sup>42</sup> or her fundamental act of mediation, that is, her consent to the conception of the Savior.<sup>43</sup> She converts the grace of redemption to the use of mankind; or, rather, she leads each individual person to a participation in the grace of redemption and thereby to a union with God. If we usually think only of this aspect of Mary's mediatorship, that is because, in prayer, we appeal to Mary in so far as she exercises that office by her heavenly intercession. Moreover, we call directly not only upon Mary, but also upon Christ and God, and upon the saints apart from Mary. Consequently, from that aspect, we do not easily come to the idea that the mediation of Mary, like that of Christ, is simply universal—universal in the sense, that no grace is granted by God without an actual and intercessory cooperation from Mary, and that, therefore, all graces of salvation come to us through her hands.

Many theologians, it is true, have admitted this thesis only as an opinion which is at most remotely probable. It has even been called an empty exaggeration or a pious but unfounded phantasy, as was the case with Muratori against St. Alphonsus.<sup>44</sup> We need only to define the meaning of the thesis and consider the connection of Mary's position as mediatrix in heaven with her functions of mediatrix in general, in order to see that a scientific con-

<sup>42</sup> See Vol. I, chap. 11.

<sup>43</sup> See *supra*, chap. 11.

<sup>44</sup> Ludov. Ant. Muratori wrote his book in 1747; it was not directed against St. Alphonsus, whose work was written only two years later. St. Alphonsus' book is really an answer to Muratori. About this, see Dillenschneider, *La Mariologie de S. Alphonse de Liguori* (Fribourg, 1931), I, 289–327 and (1934) II, 166–95.

sequence forces a real theologian to accept the thesis and to realize, too, that a criticism of it may be traced to a superficial consideration of the state of the case.

Indeed real meaning of the thesis is not that we do not receive any grace unless we ourselves beg Mary's intercession. It means only that no prayer is answered without the assistance of her intercession, and that a culpable and positive exclusion of that intercession in the intention of him who prays, must most certainly endanger the granting of the petition. (2) The doctrine should not mean that Mary's intercession is altogether and in general necessary to move Christ to make intercession for us, as if, of Himself, He were not willing to do so. It means that, according to the order fixed by God and Christ Himself, Christ's merits and intercession will be of no avail without Mary's cooperating intercession, and that, accordingly, every grace is granted only as conjointly obtained by her.

The existence of this order is shown from its fitness to the dignity of the Mother of God, to her characteristic of Domina and Queen, to the magnitude of her fullness of grace, and especially to the universal dispensation according to which, in the apportioning of grace, God follows a gradual distribution. In reality, these are only reasons *de convenientia* which may recommend the doctrine, but do not prove it. For lack of positive evidence in revelation, a real proof for the existence of this order can be built up as follows: We must show that it forms an integral part of a special and actual order capable of proof, which, without it, would be incomplete, or interrupted in its natural development. Thus the non-existence of this order would be objected to as a real anomaly.

The lack of the universal mediation of grace through Mary's intercession appears at once as such an anomaly, when we observe that not only Mary's whole position as mediatrix, but also all her preceding mediatorial functions are entirely designed for a universal mediation of grace, and condition the communication of all grace without exception. For all Mary's functions as mediatrix form mutually one organic whole, in which the later ones are based on the preceding and make their influence felt; the preceding continue to operate in the following.

(1) First, her mediation in the granting of the very source of grace, which took place in the conception and birth of Christ, indicates that Mary was destined also for the universal and continuous communication of the flow of grace from this source as "aqueduct of grace."<sup>45</sup> (2) It is further indicated by the fact that, by her cooperation in the sacrifice of the redemption, Mary conjointly obtained all graces. For it is evident that her heavenly intercession must be to Christ's interpellation in heaven as her sacrificial activity on earth was to that of Christ. So also the scope of her intercession must answer to that of her earthly activity, as Christ's interpellation to His sacrificial activity. (3) By her cooperation in Christ's sacrifice, Mary became the depositary of the merits of the redemption for all mankind and for all times. In the first place she cooperated in imploring the Holy Ghost to hasten His descent upon the infant Church. Likewise, her continuous cooperation must hold as a normal condition for all future fruits of Christ's merits and for the action of the Holy Ghost. (4) By her cooperation in the redemption, Mary became the spiritual mother of all the redeemed.

<sup>45</sup> The expression is from St. Bernard (cf. *Ecclus.* 24:41).

All the graces of redemption are specifically intended for the communication, the production, the nourishing, and the completion of the life of grace, and for this very reason Mary's continuous and universal cooperation is as natural as is that of a physical mother in the rearing of her children. (5) Finally, the communication of the grace of redemption is linked to the Church in an absolutely universal manner, so that no one obtains grace without some sort of relation to and cooperation with the Church.

We may conclude from this, first, that Mary is the ideal model of the Church; secondly, that the universal mediation of all graces by the Church cannot exist entirely of itself, if Mary is not regarded as the unfailing mediatrix of grace. For the Church also, by her prayer especially, communicates the life of grace; because, as the very bride and living body of Christ, she thereby obtains grace for all her children or members through the organic interaction with her Bridegroom and Head. There is in the Church no other individual or group of persons whose prayer can represent that of the whole Church in so cogent a manner as Mary, the heart of the Church, who was called to and most perfectly fitted for this office. In keeping with Mary's whole position in the kingdom of grace, and in relation to the influence which her plenitude of grace has on His mystical body, her continual cooperation with Christ must, in general, be held to be as natural as is the incessant cooperation of the heart with the head in the influence of the latter on the vivification of the other members of the body.

Hence, it should not be surprising that the Church, in her liturgy, uses the texts of the Sacred Scriptures refer-

ring to Wisdom incarnate, especially Ecclesiasticus, chapter 24, in so far as, under the figure of a paradise, Wisdom is represented as the mother and seat of all graces,<sup>46</sup> and that mankind is then invited to seek grace in her. Likewise, we can understand that to Mary, as figure and instrument of Wisdom, the description is applied which represents Wisdom under the figure of a channel or watercourse which, issuing from a stream, sends out in turn rivulets which render fertile the gardens of paradise.<sup>47</sup> And conversely, this idea, which is self-evident in this method of the Church and the saints in relation to the scope of Mary's activity, is also an ecclesiastical guaranty for our thesis; it can be understood only in this sense. There is no reason for understanding this idea in a more restricted sense, e.g., that by her cooperation in the incarnation of Wisdom, by which she prepared the way for the stream of Wisdom in the world, Mary participated only indirectly in the activity of Wisdom. The Church's application of these texts to Mary, as figure of the absolute Wisdom, requires rather that Mary be also regarded especially as the figure of Wisdom in her continual, universal, and personal activity and power, which makes it necessary for man to seek grace from her and in relation to her. Thus Mary must be regarded as one who, by virtue of her fullness of grace, exercises by continual activity a universal influence in heaven also. This idea is reflected in the fact that even from ancient times Mary was called the treasury of grace or the throne of grace, the ladder and gate of heaven, and the hope of the children of Eve. These expressions, used

<sup>46</sup> Ecclus. 24:25 ff.

<sup>47</sup> Ecclus. 24:40 ff.

of no other saint, proclaim not only that the Cause of grace once abided in her, through her descended from heaven, by her established our hope, but they are also connected with Mary's actual place in heaven. So certain is their interpretation that they frequently serve to elucidate the manner in which the order in the distribution of grace corresponds to the order of its origin, and as the Redeemer through Mary came down to earth, so mankind through her must be brought to heaven.

This question was little discussed in learned circles. Although it obtained the approval of many preachers and ascetics, its justification was weak, rather oratorical than scientific, and was based on mere reasons of fittingness. The result was that theologians held more aloof.<sup>48</sup> Bossuet correctly indicated the road to its proof.<sup>49</sup> He applied the principle from the Apostle: "The gifts of God are without repentance,"<sup>50</sup> to the granting of the Principle of grace through Mary; and concluded that, in the distribution of grace, the order established by that act was not annulled by God, but rather was consistently carried through; but he did not follow the matter through. St. Alphonsus by preference based the thesis<sup>51</sup> on texts taken from St. Bernard, St. Bonaventure, St. Bernardine, and some others, but these texts were either poorly chosen or not sufficiently clear and decisive. Among them there is an annotation on the twofold fullness of grace in

<sup>48</sup> In recent years the attitude of the theologians toward this question has changed. See the abundant bibliography on this question in Bittremieux, *Marialia*, 1936, pp. 320-28. This bibliography completes the list of literature of *De mediatione universalis*, pp. 136-38.

<sup>49</sup> Bossuet, *Serm. 3 sur la concept.*, and *Serm. 4 sur l'annonciation*, in the edition of Lebarcq, respectively V, 606-30, and III, 428-42.

<sup>50</sup> Rom. 11:29.

<sup>51</sup> St. Alphonsus, *Glorie de Maria* (1750), chap. 5.

Christ and in Mary: "In Christ, there was a fullness of grace as flowing into the head, in Mary, as pouring out through the neck";<sup>52</sup> this gloss was later attached to the text of the letter *Cogitis me*. Attacked by Muratori under the pseudonym of Lamindus Pritanius,<sup>53</sup> St. Alphonsus brought out the intrinsic reasons for attaching greater importance to Mary's cooperation in the work of redemption. For the rest he appealed to texts previously quoted, among which some, again, were of little or no value. Against Muratori he proved especially that St. Bernard had not only spoken about the universal mediation of grace in Christ's conception, but that he had also championed the thesis in his famous sermon *De aqueductu*.<sup>54</sup>

This classical text of St. Bernard, which so beautifully interprets Mary's position in the distribution of grace, reads thus: "Observe, O man, the council of God, acknowledge the council of wisdom, the council of piety. He who is to bedew the ground with heavenly dew, poured it first upon the entire fleece; <sup>55</sup> He who is to ransom the

<sup>52</sup> This gloss is from Ubertino di Casale, *Arbor vitae*, Venice, 1485, but was attached to the text of *Epist. Cogitis me* by St. Bernardine of Siena, who copied Ubertino. (See Blondeel, *op. cit.*, pp. 30 f., 36.) He quotes the gloss alone as being from (Pseudo-) Jerome in *De nativit. B.V.*, chap. 8 (Lyons, 1650), IV, 96.

<sup>53</sup> Scheeben here confuses two things: (1) Under the pseudonym of Lamindus Pritanius, L. A. Muratori published a book *De ingeniorum moderatione in religionis negotio* (Paris, 1714), directed mainly against the advocates of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, and later, under his own name, *Della regolata divozione*. (2) After Muratori's death, his nephew Soli, partly under the pseudonym of Lamindus Pritanius Redivivus, also against the *Clorie di Maria* of St. Alphonsus, wrote an apology for his uncle: *Epistola Paraenetica ad P. Ben. Plazzam, SJ, censorem minus aequum libelli "della regolata divozione"* (Venice, 1755), to which St. Alphonsus replied with *Riposta ad un anonimo* (1756), in which he elucidates mainly the ideas of St. Bernard.

<sup>54</sup> St. Bernard, *Serm. in Nativ. B.V.; PL, CLXXXIII, 440–48*. The most recent treatise on this question by G. Mislei (Rome, 1862, p. II, chap. 5), though deep and very detailed, is not very sound.

<sup>55</sup> Judg. 6:36–38.

human race deposited the whole price in Mary. And to what purpose? Perhaps that Eve might be pardoned through her daughter and that the accusation of the first man against the woman might be wiped out. Thou shalt no longer say, O Adam: The woman whom Thou gavest me gave me of the forbidden tree; say rather: The woman whom Thou gavest me gave me to eat of the blessed fruit. A council most pious, indeed: But it may be that some further meaning is intended, and that this is not the complete sense; this may, indeed, be true but, unless I am mistaken, it is not enough for your desires; it is like the sweetness of milk; it can be drawn out perchance if we press harder. Let us, therefore, observe more closely with how great a desire of devotion He who thus placed in Mary the fullness of all good, wishes to honor her so that, if there is any hope, any grace, any salvation in us, we may know that it comes from her who ascended abounding in delights. Clearly, a garden of delights upon which the coming south wind of God shall not only breathe, but shall blow over and breathe through and through, so that His fragrance, that is, the *charismata* of grace, shall flow, and flow abundantly. Take away this sun which illuminates the world; where is the light of day? Take away Mary, the Star of the Sea, of a vast and boundless sea; what is left but an encompassing mist, a shadow of death, a profound darkness. Therefore, let us venerate this Mary with our innermost heart, with all the affections of our breast, and in all our prayers, because such is the will of Him who wishes to possess us entirely through Mary.”<sup>56</sup>

By this latter expression: “who wishes to possess us entirely through Mary,” St. Bernard understands her

<sup>56</sup> St. Bernard, *Serm. cit.*, nos. 6–7; *PL*, CLXXXIII, 440.

permanent mediation through intercession. This is quite evident from the fact that, in regard to its influence and universality, he immediately compares Mary's intercession with that of Christ. He explains how beautiful and consoling is this divinely decreed and twofold communication of grace by Christ and Mary. The words he uses are, "Since, indeed, there is in Mary an undefiled human nature, free not only from all contamination, but free also because of the singularity of her nature";<sup>57</sup> these words are sometimes explained as contradicting the context, as if by the latter part of the sentence, Mary is distinguished from the rest of mankind by a particular kind of nature, whereas they express only the contrast with Christ's twofold nature.

St. Bernardine of Siena<sup>58</sup> goes more deeply into the basis of our doctrine and gives it the correct interpretation, although in this form the reason is only a reason of convenience and the expression sounds somewhat exaggerated. He says: "Since it appears that the whole divine nature, that is, His will, power, knowledge, His whole being and existence, is enclosed in the Virgin's womb, I do not fear to say that this Virgin had a certain jurisdiction over the outflow of all graces, for from her womb, as from an ocean of divinity, flowed streams and rivers of grace. . . . And because the mother of the Son of God, who produced the Holy Ghost, is so exalted . . . all gifts, virtues, and graces of the same Holy Ghost are administered by her hands to whomever she desires, when, in what manner, and to what degree she wishes."

It is evident that both texts are concerned with only the

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 7.

<sup>58</sup> St. Bernardine of Siena, *De nativ. B.V.*, chap. 8 (Lyons, 1650), IV, 96.

first foundation upon which Mary's universal mediation of grace is built. The figure of "the neck of the mystical body,"<sup>59</sup> used especially by St. Bernardine and answering to St. Bernard's figure of the aqueduct,<sup>60</sup> indicates very clearly indeed both Mary's total subordination to Christ in the communication of grace and the universality of this mediation as well as its form, in part at least. It represents Mary as the connecting link which projects from the body and which is lifted heavenward with the head. It illustrates less the communication of grace by Mary's own activity than do the more profound reasons. In this respect the figure of the heart deserves the preference and is, in general, more plastic and vivid.

From this thesis follows as corollaries that, according to its nature, Mary's intercession not only possesses a greater and more universal influence than that of all other saints, but also, which is not the case in any other saint, forms an ordinary and indispensable means of salvation for all men. Consequently the invocation of Mary to obtain her intercession possessed a meaning quite different from the invocation of other saints, since it must be contained at least implicitly in every prayer. Further particulars about this invocation as a means of grace and about the principle that the devotion to Mary is a certain sign of election, belong to the doctrine of grace.

In recent years the devotion to Christ's sacred humanity is concentrated in the devotion to His Sacred Heart, and is thus deepened, vivified, and as it were, transformed. In an analogous way, with ecclesiastical permission and approval, the devotion to the most pure Heart

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, *De salut. angel.*, a. 1, c. 2 (quoted by Blondeel, *op. cit.*, p. 36).

<sup>60</sup> See *supra*, note 54.

of Mary has been developed. Both devotions have a profound theological foundation. Their special object forms, as it were, the focus to which is brought the entire fullness and greatness of Catholic thought regarding Christ's human nature and Mary's person. From this focal point the thought can be clearly elucidated on all sides. In the case of Christ, the heart can be regarded only as a member of His body and thus formally represents only His human nature. In the case of Mary, the heart is the life-center of her person and, as such, it represents the latter even in the maternal distinguishing mark of her person, since her heart is the instrument of her physical and spiritual motherhood.

The profound and dogmatical grounds defining the devotion to Jesus' Sacred Heart and to the most pure Heart of Mary present both hearts in an intimate and organic union. They justify also the union of both as objects of devotion and, therefore, their being represented side by side. At the same time, those grounds are of such a nature, that only by a complete denial of them would it be possible to add to these hearts the heart of St. Joseph.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>61</sup> See Vol. I, chap. 7.

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